

BT 78 .R35 1925

Randall, John Herman, 1871-
1946.

The irrepressible conflict
in religion

1875. 10. 10. 10.



THE IRREPRESSIBLE
CONFLICT IN RELIGION

THE IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT IN RELIGION

By

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DODGE PUBLISHING COMPANY

148-156 West 23rd Street
NEW YORK

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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FOREWORD

The fundamentalist - modernist controversy within the churches, which came to such open and almost violent expression in the winter of 1923-24, has been a long time on the way, and it will not be settled for many years to come. That it was inevitable, all who have been familiar with religious conditions in this country know full well.

The causes go back ultimately to the Protestant Reformation; more immediately, however, they are to be found in the wide-spread advance of scientific ideas and methods. That the War has also helped, both directly and indirectly, to force the present crisis is undeniable. But sooner or later, the conflict between the modern viewpoint and the older conceptions of the churches was bound to come. It is the irrepressible conflict in religion today.

Now that it has been precipitated by leaders on both sides, thus forcing the majority in all the churches to take sides more or less definitely, it is earnestly to be hoped that the primary issues

FOREWORD

may not be glozed over, the "quarrel" hushed up, and the controversy abandoned, for that would only mean another compromise of issues and principles that can no longer be compromised without fatal results to organized religion. It is too late in the day to postpone into some indefinite future the solution of these vexed problems which the increasing intelligence of this age is so earnestly demanding.

The need of this critical hour for organized religion is for more light and less heat,—more of the light of calm reason and disinterested inquiry, and less of the heat of prejudice and bitterness, of crimination and recrimination. In the interest of that nobler faith that one day will surely be, when the truth will set men free, this book has been written.

JOHN HERMAN RANDALL.

New York City,
May 1st, 1925.

I

THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT

VERSUS

RELIGIONS OF AUTHORITY



IN his recent novel, "The Cathedral," Hugh Walpole puts the following words into the mouth of Canon Ronder, one of the leading characters of the story, "I believe that before many years it will become clear to the whole world that there are now two religions,—the religion of authority and the religion of the spirit,—and if in such a division I must choose, I am for the religion of the spirit every time."

Back of all the theological controversies that are dividing the churches today lies this one fundamental question: Where is the seat of authority in religion? Does it lie in some institution, or in some book, or in some person, or in some creed; or is it rather to be found deep within man himself? This is in no sense a new problem

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in religion, and for those of the liberal faith it has long since been settled, but we are forced to realize that many old issues that we had supposed were buried forever are once again thrusting themselves upon the attention of men, and the struggle that is now on in the orthodox churches for greater freedom in religion is only another phase of the age-long struggle between the religion of the spirit and the religion of authority.

Former President J. G. Schurman, of Cornell University, has called our attention to the fact that all religions pass through three stages of growth. First, the chief emphasis is placed upon the cult, the ceremony, the sacrifices, the ritual. These are the important things. The gods are not supposed to care much what people believe or how they behave. So long as they bring the required sacrifices and go through the ceremonies with exact punctiliousness, all is well and the gods are satisfied. But as time goes by humanity reaches the next stage in religious development. The cult still remains, the rites and ceremonies still persist, but the people pay less attention to them than formerly. The whole ritualistic side of religion is gradually crowded into a subordinate position, as the chief emphasis is shifted to beliefs. The principal thing now is felt to be

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theology, doctrines, creeds. Then comes the period of creed-making, followed by long centuries of theological controversies, with their inevitable accompaniments of heresy trials and persecutions of every kind. And then, at last, religion passes into a new phase of development. People may keep their creeds on record in their books or church manuals, or they may discard the old creeds entirely, but they no longer feel bound by them, for they come to feel at last that the only essential thing in religion is the spirit that dominates one's life,—the sum total of a man's spiritual attitude toward life.

It is this second, or theological, stage out of which religion is now passing, not without bitter struggles and great upheavals within the confines of organized religion. The old theological religion, based on its creeds and dogmas, is slowly but surely dying as the true and genuine religion of the spirit is coming to birth in the lives and hearts of men everywhere. But the religions of authority die hard, and we need not be surprised to find that man can only achieve freedom in religion, as everywhere else, through his own persistent and heroic efforts to throw off the shackles of external authority in his spiritual life.

Let us trace briefly the development of the

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idea of authority in religion as it has been shifted from one place to another in the history of Christianity. In order to avoid confusion let us define authority in religion as meaning *the claim to command belief and conduct whether or not that belief or conduct find inward support in the souls and minds of men*. Down to the close of the Middle Ages it was generally believed that the seat of authority in religion was vested in the institution, the great and powerful Roman Catholic Church. It was held that the keys of heaven and hell had been intrusted to this institution, and that, therefore, it controlled the one and only pathway to salvation. The Bible was there in manuscript form, but the rank and file of the people had no access to its pages, and knew little or nothing of its contents. The creeds were there to be believed unquestioningly, and the church alone had the right to interpret these creeds and to tell men what they must believe.

With the coming of the Reformation, the Protestants broke with the theory of the authority of the church; they refused the claim of the Catholic hierarchy to be sole interpreters for them of the Word of God. If an old historic church, counting its members in millions, could speak with one voice, and that voice represented the truth which

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had been, if not discovered, at least ratified by every individual member, it would be entitled to great respect; it would have great power and influence, but even then it would only acquire these through having found the inward life in those to whom its appeal was made. Even such a voice could not act as an external infallible authority upon anyone without making his life artificial. There is, however, no such voice. Roman Catholic dogma today does not represent any such consensus of opinion within the Catholic Church; the more men believe on the mere outward authority of the church, the less is the power of their testimony to the value of the truth.

The Protestants transferred the seat of authority in religion from the institution to the Book, and at the outset enunciated the right of individual interpretation of the Bible. But it was soon found that there was no common agreement as to the meaning of the teachings of the Bible, which was now claimed as the sole authority for faith and practice. So many new sects sprang up, all claiming the authority of the Bible, each one for its own difference from every other, but also from a criticism of the Bible itself, that intelligent men soon came to see that a Book which carried such widely differing meanings to differ-

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ent people was very far from being an infallible authority. The next step was taken when these new sects translated their particular interpretations of the Bible into their respective creeds, thus shutting out all who did not agree with them. So that the Reformation, that started on the right principle of private interpretation, ended in the same fallacy against which it had originally protested. The Roman Catholic Church claimed that the sole authority rested in the one church with its infallible creed. Protestantism now claimed that it was to be found in many churches with their differing creeds, and nothing was left for thoughtful minds but to lose all faith in the claims of both.

When the fact is clearly grasped that the Biblical literature is the history of a life of growing thought and changing practice, it will be seen that while the Bible retains the value of much inspired life, it must also contain points of view and standards of life and belief which are contradicted and transcended even within its own covers. But in spite of this fact, parts of the Bible are still read solemnly to the people as the Word of God which cannot possibly represent the truth for their lives, nor appeal to them in any real or vital sense. The God of Samuel and

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Joshua is very different from the God of the later Hebrew Prophets. It is this that led Mr. Blatchford to say that we should never make much headway with reform until the truth was told about the Bible.

The next step that is usually taken, when the infallibility of the Bible as a whole is abandoned, is to make the New Testament our authority. Many people who have reconciled themselves to the criticism of the Old Testament are fearful of touching the New. It is utterly impossible, however, to shield the New Testament from precisely the same investigation that is applied to the Old Testament and to all other literature. You cannot apply the canons of historical and literary criticism to the Bible as far as the last page of Malachi, and then abandon them when you open the first chapter of Matthew. The New Testament is just as truly a record of developing and changing thought as is the Old. If anyone says that his authority is the New Testament, I would ask him, "Which part of it?" The differences between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospels, and between the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles are very great and important,—which is to be your authority? There are things in the New Testament, to go back to which

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now would be unmistakable retrogression. We have made great advances upon the New Testament point of view in some matters,—slavery, the woman's question, and almsgiving, for example. The passage in Corinthians which declares the inferiority of woman to man, the theory that woman was made for the man, and not man for the woman, that she must have her head covered in public assemblies, that her glory is her hair, and that she must not speak in meetings, is still read in churches as if it were the solemn Word of God, and yet is there anyone left who believes it? In spite of the contentions of the fundamentalists, the idea of the infallible authority of the Bible, in either Old or New Testaments, is forever gone from the thinking of intelligent people.

When this is recognized the next refuge is to fall back upon Jesus as the sole authority. The position taken is that historical criticism must do its work upon the New Testament documents to find out what the teachings of Jesus really were, and then make them our authority. But here we are immediately face to face with many difficulties. One is that of the different conceptions of Jesus in the New Testament. Who is our authority? The Jesus of Mark's Gospel who

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grows in knowledge, or the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel who knows all things from the beginning? The Jesus of Peter's speeches in the Acts,—“A man approved of God,” one of whom Peter could say, “God was with him,” or the Jesus Christ of the Epistle to the Colossians, “in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”? These conceptions are widely different,—which do we take for authority?

Another difficulty is that once we take the view to which any historical study compels us, that the mind of Jesus was a growing mind, we cannot take the view that it ever reached finality. At which stage of its growth does it become our authority? If Jesus grew in knowledge during his lifetime, would he not have continued to grow if he had lived longer? If he were among us now, would not his opinions on many subjects be different from what they were then? For example, would he now believe in demoniacal possession, as he probably did then? Or would he now say what he did about almsgiving? How can we conceive of a mind as growing, and also as having reached finality, and able therefore to be a final authority for us?

But there is another difficulty. On a considerable number of important questions which we

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have to decide, there is no clear word of Jesus which we can quote for their settlement. One of the fundamental problems today as we think of the future is that of the proper education of children. Jesus is not recorded to have said a single word on the education question, and we cannot cite his authority on any phase of the great problem. Among the crucial questions of our time is: What share of the profits of labor should be given to the manual worker? How to distribute wealth more justly is a pressing problem. What should be the type of social organization to supersede the old order? How can our intense nationalisms be merged into a true internationalism? Jesus has left no authoritative word on any of the important questions. That there should be justice, that love should be the guiding principle of life, are clearly his teachings, but our difficulty in the practical world begins when we ask in what social or industrial or world systems are justice and love to be expressed, and on this important point the authority of Jesus cannot be quoted.

He did not deal with systems as such. He said nothing even of the duty of liberating slaves. How to provide for our old people, how to house the population in decency, what is to be done

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about the crying evils of the land problem, whether women should have political equality with men,—none of these questions were on the horizon of Jesus, and it is no wonder that he has left no decisive word on these subjects. Every business man, every mother, every employee, every teacher is facing a dozen questions every day which cannot be referred to any word or example of Jesus. That he did lay down fundamental principles, no one denies; but as to how these principles should be applied in practice, he has left no word. These things show how much of unreality there often is in the use of the phrase: “Jesus is our authority.”

A good illustration of the “unconscious” insincerity that exists in this claim is found in the discussion on the report of the Divorce Commissioners in England a few years ago. The majority report presented a most interesting document to the Congregational Union of England. It began with laying down the absolute authority of Christ on the question of marriage as final. It also declared that the teaching of Christ on this matter was quite explicit, and that it pronounced marriage to be indissoluble. One would naturally expect the document to go on to condemn the recommendations for enlarging the grounds

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for divorce. On the contrary, it ended by recommending their adoption. This is an instance of *formally* bowing to the authority of Christ, formally enthroning him *in words*, and then passing on to obey our own judgment as to what ought to be done. It would be far more honest to say at once that we cannot take the teaching of Jesus on this subject as an external authority for our guidance today. And when we stop to think how vastly different are the problems and needs of our age from those of the age in which Jesus lived, we realize that it is utterly impossible that detailed authority for conduct or for belief should be found in his teachings.

It has been this same belief that there must be somewhere an external authority for religion that has led to the formulation of all the creeds that the various churches hold and teach as containing the sole authoritative statement of religious truth which men must believe. We have only to remember the origin of all these creeds and the sources of the ideas that underlie them, however, to realize how far they are from being the final statements of truth. And the fact that they elicit so feeble a response from the growing, intelligent minds of today only proves that man has outgrown these earlier expressions of truth.

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As a matter of fact, there has always been, right down through the centuries, those spiritually minded leaders within the church who have been keenly conscious of the inadequacy of the creeds, and, in fact, of all doctrinal statements as giving expression to the highest or final truth of religion. Here, for instance, is Bishop Westcott of the Anglican Church, who, speaking of the Thirty-Nine Articles, says: "It is that I object to them altogether, and not to any particular doctrine. I have at times fancied it was presumption in us to attempt to define and determine what Scripture has not defined. * * *

The whole tenor of Scripture seems to me opposed to all dogmatism and full of all application." Or take the testimony of John Wesley, after one of the fullest experiences ever given to mortal of the action of religion in human life: "I am sick of opinions. I am weary to bear them; my soul loathes the frothy food. Give me solid, substantial religion; give me a humble, gentle lover of God and man, a man full of mercy and good faith, a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love. Let my soul be with such Christians wheresoever they be and whatsoever opinions they are of." Or here is a remarkable statement from

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John Henry Newman, who became a Cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church: "Freedom from symbols and articles is abstractly the highest state of the Christian communion and the peculiar privilege of the primitive church. * * * Technicality and formalism are in their degree inevitable results of public confessions of faith. * * * When confessions do not exist, the mysteries of Divine truth, instead of being exposed to the gaze of the profane and uninstructed, are kept hidden in the bosom of the Church far more fruitfully than is otherwise possible."

These witnesses, remember, had all signed creeds; they all belonged to churches that bristled with dogmatic propositions. Yet what is clearly evident is that at the back of their minds lay a consciousness, not formulated, and therefore all the more powerful, that the strength and vitality of religion lay quite elsewhere than in the doctrinal creeds of any or all of the churches. The creeds arose out of the speculative, not the religious spirit. The "heretics" speculated first, and the church met them with counter-speculations of its own. The ages that produced the church formularies were the least vital; the periods when they had the fullest sway were those

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of the greatest license and degradation of character.

It is the glory of the Unitarian movement that it dared to place the ultimate authority in religion within man's own soul, and not outside; and it remained for James Martineau, in his monumental work, "The Seat of Authority in Religion," to set forth in unanswerable terms for all time the great truth that the real seat of authority is not outside, but within man himself; not in any institution or book or person or creed, but deep in the soul of man lies the only authority that religion possesses.

The religion of the spirit which is today gradually superseding the older religions of authority gives up once and for all the fruitless quest for any external authority in religion; first, because it cannot be found. The search has been proved to be a vain search; no such authority exists anywhere outside of man's own being. That it cannot be found is a profound blessing; that men have professed to have found it outside themselves, has been one of the most fruitful sources of mischief in the world, resisting the progress of thought, fettering the minds of men, compelling them often to walk through fire and blood to their natural and legitimate possessions. If

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all men could but see and admit this truth, it would mean the emancipation of religion from everything that now keeps it from becoming the dynamic regenerating power in human life.

Manifestly it was never intended that we should be saved the trouble and effort of personal discovery in religion, nor the task of solving our own ethical and social problems. Every man of us has his own burden to carry and his problems to solve. Every age must build up its own theology and must keep it ever open to revision with the coming of new facts. It must also frame its own standard of righteousness, which should in every age be higher than of any previous age. The task is never ended because the world is ever growing, man's range of experience is ever widening, and the new facts are constantly multiplying.

But the religion of the spirit gives up forever the search for an external authority because, in a still deeper sense, it knows that if it could be found it would prove fatal to the religious and moral life of man. The principle involved is universal in its application. At every point at which a man obeys an external authority, without feeling an inward response to and ratification of its command, the act of obedience is not a moral or

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spiritual act. To obey any authority without this inward response makes man a slave. Such a man has surrendered his inalienable right to freedom as a man. And to believe the creed of any church simply on the authority of that church, instead of because one's whole inner being, mind and spirit, responds confidently and joyously to the truth of the creed, is to become a mere puppet in the hands of others,—and in the realm, too, of the inner life which belongs forever to oneself. The great weakness of organized religion today lies in the fact that there are so many beliefs that are accepted *nominally* by multitudes, while the heart and mind within men have long since rejected them.

Are we then, in these important matters of morals and religion, left wholly to ourselves? Is every man to do everything in religious thinking and in the sphere of morals for himself and by himself? Is every man to be his own authority, and can there be therefore as many different authorities as there are different individuals? Surely not, for that would mean chaos and utter confusion in the result, and despair for the individual in the process. What is there to prevent this, if there is no external authority?

The fact is that no man is a mere individual;

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the content of his individuality is partly a social content; he is rooted in society and in history. He must think for himself, but he cannot think at all without the help of many others; he must find the authority for his life in his own nature, but he will find that others share that nature and the inner authority speaks to them also. So far from the man being his own authority, he comes to feel that he is only one interpreter of an authority which is much greater than any individual, and greater than all individuals taken together. He finds it even greater than he can comprehend. He needs other interpreters to help him understand it more fully. This is the experience that has led men to believe in "the Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." And this same experience has brought them inevitably into groups and societies and churches that they may help one another to know that Power better and realize it more fully in their lives.

Those who know most, who have had the broadest experiences and possess the deepest insight, naturally come to be the greatest helpers of their fellows. And this is what we need most in the religious and moral life,—teachers, interpreters, helpers, sources of vital inspiration,—not infal-

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lible guides or final authorities. Instead of looking to the church for anything of an infallible nature, men ought to turn to it naturally for help and inspiration and fresh light on life's problems. If the church could only forget all idea of any "infallibility,"—a thing that has never existed, and put away from itself all ideas of any "authority," and simply be willing to become the helper and friend of mankind, then the days of its true power would begin. The richest personalities are the greatest helpers. How long would any intelligent man be content to listen to one in the pulpit who believed that he spoke with an infallible authority to men? When religious or moral teachers are looked upon as absolute authorities, they put men in bondage; so long as they are willing to remain as helpers and inspirers they lead men into the broader places of life and truth. When the prophet becomes the oracle, men become slaves; so long as he remains the prophet he leads the march of God's free men.

But still more concretely, just what do we mean by the religion of the spirit? We recall the old words, "The Lord is the Spirit." These words may be reversed to get their true meaning, "The Spirit is the Lord." We all know that there is in our lives a Spirit that works for the

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high and good, a something that will not let us be content with ourselves as we are, or with conditions in the world as they are, a Spirit that forever reaches out and on and beyond to heights we descry in vision, a power that struggles within us with our lower selves and constantly aspires toward a nobler, purer, more unselfish life. And we know that there is the same Spirit of power working in the same way in all other lives. We may call this power the Divine Spirit, who is in some mysterious way one with our spirits, and yet greater than we ourselves, a power that fills all life.

Spiritual life lies in the interaction of this Spirit of Good with our own spirits. This is the Spirit we seek to obey, not in any mechanical way because the Spirit is vital within us. We may call this Spirit within us our "higher self," or "God," or "the Christ," or "Buddha," or "Abdul Baha," or by any name we choose. The name does not matter if only we know the reality and respond to its call. For all practical purposes, this Spirit of good within us is the Lord of our lives, before which we bow in loving reverence. The principal reason for shaking off the fetters of any theology, regarded as final, is that we may not be hindered in our experience of this Divine Spirit within us.

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Wherever a body of opinion of any kind is insisted upon, religion as an inward experience is not left free to become its rich and abundant self.

It is, unfortunately, in the power of thought-forms to cramp and narrow the experiences of the soul, and here it is that their greatest mischief lies. The function of thinking in religion should be not only to formulate the outcome of experience, but also to widen the realm of possible experience, for we do not get experience without ideas, and the larger the ideas, the wider the field of possible experience. It is quite true that through all popular forms of religion, forms of service and forms of thought, the Eternal Reality has in some measure reached the souls of men. But the range of experience is always narrower whenever finality has attached to the form.

Religious experience is like a perennial spring of the water of life. Men have brought their theological, ecclesiastical and ritual cups to the spring and filled them, and then, unfortunately, they have gone away believing that their little cups contained all the water there was. To make the church an exclusive authority, and the Bible the only Word of God; to make any symbols the only tokens of the Divine Presence, and Jesus

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the only Saviour; to point to any body of opinion as the only Divine truth, whether this is done in Roman Catholicism, in orthodox Protestant or in liberal churches is to make it more difficult for man to experience God outside these things. Thousands of Roman Catholics could never find God in a Protestant Church, and thousands of Protestants could never find God in a Catholic Church. Very few Christians would find Him in a Jewish Synagogue and perhaps still fewer Jews would recognize Him in a Christian Church. The ecclesiastical limit even if it included all the churches and synagogues and mosques and pagodas throughout the world would still be too narrow. The flower of the common garden, the cowslips in the meadow, the glorious stars of the midnight sky, ought to awaken as genuine religious feelings in us as the sight of any altar, or the bread and wine of the communion service, or any other ecclesiastical symbol. When Lord Tennyson said to a friend with whom he was walking through the woods, "On your knees, man, here are violets," he was addressing the inward soul that had escaped the tyrannies of special symbols and was therefore free to find God everywhere.

We find a beautiful suggestion as to the true

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place for a creed, in science, for science has its creed as well as religion, only it discovers it differently, and it uses it very differently than the church uses its theology. For one thing, science has reached its infallibility by persistently refusing to be regarded as infallible; by making mistakes and not being afraid to acknowledge them; and by leaving all its conclusions open to every species of test. It does not forbid, but earnestly welcomes free investigation. And when some one comes forward with a new or different view from that which has been commonly accepted, science does not try him for heresy, but only asks for his evidence. And theology will only regain the ground it has lost, and secure once more the world's intellectual respect, by following in this track. It will have to renounce its bogus infallibility, and gain its new certitudes where alone they are to be found.

But this part of the method of science, important though it be, is not the chief lesson it has to teach. That comes when we study the way science uses its creed. It is not, we discover, occupied in incessantly repeating it. It does not sing, chant or recite it. It does not impose it as a test on anyone or require a subscription to its articles. Yet its creed is ever present at the base

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of all its operations. And it cannot afford to be incorrect in it, for the slightest error throws all its operations into confusion.

Observe an engineer as he plans and builds his bridge. His entire working belief is there. His theory of statics and dynamics; his convictions about currents and wind pressures, about lever-ages, about the properties of the arch and of its thrust on buttresses; his views on the relation of beauty to utility, all are there. He has not sung them, or repeated them, or "subscribed" to them. He has built them into his bridge. His creed is embedded and incorporated in his work. And men, when they find the work good, proclaim the creed to be sound. There is no place or need for any "heated controversy" over such a creed.

Our engineer, it may be observed, has, outside of his work, all manner of interesting theories. He may have something to say on the ultimate properties of matter; he may even doubt, with Berkeley, whether matter exists at all apart from mind. But the world will take his ideas on these speculative questions rather lightly. They are at least "pious opinions," which he may hold or not hold, and no one is either the better or worse for them. What men insist on is that his beliefs on bridge-building and the other things he con-

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tracts *to do* shall be sound. In that sphere they will tolerate no "heresy."

In this way of using its creed, science, we repeat, has at the present time a lesson of supreme importance to teach theology. If the church is wise today, it will also discover that its beliefs are given it, not for incessant subscribing and chanting and repeating, but as a plan to work by. Its creed should be a program. No article of it should be allowed that cannot be expressed in the form, not so much of words, as of works and institutions.

When the church has found this way of expressing itself it will have no further trouble with heretics. When we put our creed into a word, straightway our neighbor is instantly ready with a counter-word. The ring of our "shibboleths" irresistibly invites opposition. But when we put our belief into our character, into our deed of kindness, into our heroic sacrifice and service to humanity, then there is no slightest room for argument. And whatever of our creed cannot be expressed in these ways, what of it remains as mere words, untranslatable into deeds and things, may just as well be left out, or at least relegated to the realm of each individual's speculative opinion.

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When the religion of the spirit shall have fully come to this earth, there is little doubt but that the church that then exists will organize itself along these lines. The coming creed will be a practical program; it will be a statement of the laws of the moral and spiritual forces in human life, and of their application to the regeneration of men and the transformation of society. And the business of the church will lie in that application. Its life will be found, not so much in any of its verbal affirmations as in the institutions it develops and the characters it creates.

The great prophets and apostles of the race have always instinctively gone upon these lines. John Wesley accepted the theological conceptions of his time, but his real power lay in a creed which was a practical program for service to humanity. The church began without any creeds, and it has no more need of them today than in its early stages. The prophet of God will go forth now, as then, equipped with a power and a program,—and his power will come through his program,—and he will find them enough.


The religion of the spirit, which is struggling for fuller, freer expression in all the churches today, will issue in a life dedicated to the truth, not to mere opinions about the truth; it will find

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expression in the spirit of love that dominates thoughts, words and deeds; and it will constantly seek to translate that love into practical forms of service. The life of truth, the life of love, the life of service,—is there any higher conception of religion than such a life? This religion is ever new and never grows old; it can never be outgrown; no discoveries of science or formulations of philosophy can ever disturb it. There are no hampering creeds or ecclesiastical limitations to check the growth of man's life into truth, love and service. This is what all the religious aspirations of the world have aimed at as the one thing to be desired, and, at length, realized. And when this life is found and lived by men, the world will have discovered the only true and universal religion.

II

THE CAUSES OF THE PRESENT CONTROVERSY

 HERE is a profound sense in which the fundamentalist-modernist controversy which is now dividing the churches of American Protestantism is of vital concern to all, regardless of creed, if for no other reason, simply because "nothing human can be foreign to us," and the war within the churches is one of the great human struggles that characterize the present age of unrest. Even if our sympathies are on the side of modernism, still this ought not to prevent us from seeking to understand and interpret aright the basis and the motives of fundamentalism. The struggle we are now witnessing may indeed prove to be one of the most significant phenomena of the new century,—far more important for the future than are the present economic and imperialistic wars. It may mean the utter disintegration of Protestantism. It may lead to the coming of a new and revived Catholicism. If the leaders on

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both sides firmly stand their ground, if they refuse to evade the real issue at stake, if they set their faces resolutely against any compromise of their respective principles, it may mean eventually the death-knell of the theological and sectarian Christianity we have known in the past, and the coming of a new form of religion, more rational, more universal, more ethical and more social, and therefore more truly adequate to the needs of the new day that is dawning on the world.

To claim, as many do both within and without the churches, that the whole controversy is, after all, scarcely more than a tempest in a tea-pot and that it will soon blow over, that the differences of opinion are mere surface differences and do not touch the deeper foundations of Christianity, that the whole trouble is due to hot-headed and impetuous individuals on both sides who, on second sober thought, will get together and harmonize their differences in a perfectly friendly way,—this is to betray one's utter ignorance of the real situation. In the interests of truth and real religion the time has come to say openly and frankly that the differences between fundamentalism and modernism are not mere surface differences that can be amiably waved

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aside or disregarded; they are foundation differences, structural differences, amounting in their radical dissimilarity almost to the differences between two distinct religions. The fact that the modernist and the fundamentalist groups both call themselves Christians, both profess to derive their theological standards from the historic traditions of the Christian Church, and are both sheltered under the roofs of the same established ecclesiastical institutions, should not blind anyone to the profound disparity which characterizes not only their respective intellectual processes, but their objective goals, and even their spiritual experiences. Modernism and fundamentalism represent two opposing world-views, two antagonistic moral ideals, two radically different personal attitudes; and it is only a case of ostrich-like stupidity blindly to deny and evade the searching and serious character of the issue. Christianity according to fundamentalism, is one religion. Christianity according to modernism, is an entirely different religion. Differences can be glozed over, compromises can be made, amiable words can be given to the public and pious resolutions on Christian unity can be passed, as has been done so many times in the history of the churches, but all this can never bring into

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harmony these opposing world-views, these antagonistic moral ideals, these widely divergent attitudes.

Neither does it change the facts for us to bewail the present situation in the churches as a tragic scandal in view of the critical conditions that now fill the world. When the world is crying out for spiritual vision and moral leadership, without which it can never solve its great problems, what a pity, we say, that the time and energy of the churches should be given over to mere doctrinal controversies that seem to us a thousand leagues removed from the actual pressing problems of man's life today! And, indeed, it is a tragic pity. But how can we ever expect any real moral leadership or spiritual vision from churches that are so hopelessly divided against themselves, until they have frankly faced the issues involved and settled their problems in accordance with truth and right? The moral leadership we have the right to expect from organized religion will never appear until some of these deeper issues from which the present controversy proceeds, and which have for long vexed the inner life of the churches, threatened their peace and weakened their influence, are fought out to a finish.

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It would seem as if the world had had enough of wars of all kinds; but if another war must come, I want to say frankly that I would rather see it take the form of a free, open and above-board struggle within the churches between the forces of fundamentalism and modernism, a struggle in which there is no evasion or compromise of the principles involved, and which is carried on, so far as possible with human nature what it is, without bitterness and personal rancor. For such a struggle, if carried to its finish, would clear the air of confusion and uncertainty, would emancipate the churches from the many chains that bind them to a dead past, would set religion free at last to play its rightful part in the unfolding life of humanity, and would make possible a moral and spiritual leadership that we now seek in vain. My personal attitude, therefore, as I contemplate and seek to interpret the present war within the churches is one of hope, not of despair, for out of it all I can see the coming of a new and better day for religion.

In one respect, the fundamentalists are profoundly right. Modernism, if its meaning is clearly grasped and consistently accepted, goes to the very roots of religious conviction, and in-

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volves the basic purposes and even the very genius of traditional Christianity as it has come down through the centuries. The more intelligent fundamentalist leaders see this more clearly than do most of the modernists. This is their great fear,—that Christianity as it has been will be superseded by something new and different, and thus religious continuity with the past will be broken. And their fears are not groundless, for modernism is much more revolutionary than our present-day modernists. The modernist has not yet been fully transformed by his own modernism.

But in another respect, the modernists are just as profoundly right. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Christianity can hardly last much longer half fundamentalist and half modernist. It is not merely the aggressiveness of fundamentalism that is forcing a choice; it is the inherent nature of the issue itself. A Christianity that is content to clothe itself in terms of an outgrown science and an obsolete theology is hopelessly doomed in this modern age. And this is what the modernists see much more clearly than do the fundamentalists. All other questions involved are trivial as compared with these

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fundamental convictions of both parties to the struggle.

It is not my purpose to enter the field of the present controversy. What is needed just now is more light and less heat,—more careful and exact exposition and less of the bitterness of controversy. Who is to blame, or what are the causes that lie back of the present situation in the churches?

We shall not begin to grasp the gravity of the situation or be in a position rightly to interpret the war within the churches unless we come to see that it is only the culmination of forces that have long been at work in the life of organized religion. It is not a new or recent thing. Mr. Bryan, Bishop Manning, Dr. Straton and the other fundamentalist leaders are no more responsible for these wide differences that now divide the churches than are Dr. Grant, Dr. Fosdick, Dr. Parks and the other leaders of the modernists. They are all of them but mouth-pieces of ideas and principles that have had their place, either openly or implicitly, in the various churches for many centuries. The limits of space forbid our tracing the development of Christianity from the beginning, but we must go back as far as the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth cen-

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ture if we are to understand the sorry plight of present-day Protestantism.

The popular view of the Reformation held and taught in every Protestant church is very different from the view held by the scientific historian. According to the popular view the Reformation marked a great stride forward in religion. It was the modernist or radical religious movement of that day. In breaking with the Roman Catholic Church it set itself free from the "infallible authority" of the old institution, and made possible the frank and full development of the religious principle. Martin Luther stood forth in the sixteenth century as the prophet of a new freedom for the individual, a new interpretation of religious truths in harmony with the new light with which the Renaissance was flooding the world, a new and untrammelled development for religious institutions. Since the Reformation the only Christianity worthy of consideration has been that of Protestantism, as it alone has had the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth for the world. These were the ideas that I was taught and that I imbibed from Protestant books and sermons, along with all others in Protestant churches.

According to the scientific historian of today,

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the facts of the Reformation were very different. As subsequent events have proved, instead of being a distinct stride forward, the Reformation turned out to be a decided step backward in religious development. The Reformation leaders were the real fundamentalists and the Roman Catholic leaders were the modernists of that time. In breaking with the Roman Catholic Church the Protestants did not free themselves from the idea of an "infallible" external authority in religion; they simply transferred the "infallible" authority from the institution to the Bible. In reconstructing the truths of religion they were utterly uninfluenced by the new light of the Renaissance period. Their thought remained theocentric; it revolved around God and was entirely untouched by the new humanism that, a little later, realized that all things, even religion, were for the sake of man. They substituted for reason in religion, faith, inspiration, the inner light, subjective experience, and thus threw the door wide open for an indefinite multiplication of sects, for all kinds of vagaries, and for limitless absurdities. Martin Luther, great man that he was, knew nothing about freedom in religion as we understand that term, and succeeded in binding Protestantism to a mental slavery to the let-

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ter of the Bible from which present-day modernists are frantically seeking to escape.

There were two great contributions, however, that the Reformation did make to religion whose importance cannot be over-estimated, though their full implications were not to be realized for several centuries: (1) the idea of the right of private judgment, and (2) the notion that some things in religion are more important than others. These seeds were planted in the sixteenth century and they contained tremendous revolutionary possibilities for the future; but the seeds did not begin to germinate until two centuries later; and what we are witnessing in the churches today is simply the coming to flower,—the full expression of the implications of those seed-ideas which, for the most part, have lain dormant for so long. The Deists in England and France, and a little later the Unitarians in England and then in America, were the first groups to translate the new spirit of humanism and the new knowledge of science into religious terms. But for a hundred years they constituted a pitiful minority, and the modernists of today are but just beginning, in any thorough-going way, to give expression to the spirit of free inquiry in religion, for which the two germinant ideas of the Refor-

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mation paved the way. In other words, the Reformation, in these two revolutionary ideas, sowed the seed for the critical spirit of free inquiry whose growth in our own day has begun to prove a serious menace to the integrity of organized Protestantism.

As Professor Brewster points out, the simple fact is that the Protestant Reformation came almost two hundred years too soon to accomplish the reforms that we now see were needed in religion. It belongs, therefore, to the late Middle Ages, instead of to the early modern period, and so is on the wrong side of the great gulf that separates the darkness from the light. It was absolutely untouched by the new ideas and scientific conceptions of the universe and of life that a little later were to flood the world. The practical result was, that while the Reformation did clean up a few obvious abuses into which the Roman Catholic Church had fallen, *it left the entire sub-structure of mediaeval thinking untouched*, and when the creeds of Protestantism came to be formulated they gave expression to the truths of religion on the basis of, and literally in the terms of, the old pre-scientific and mediaeval thought. Luther threw his inkstand at the Devil, and the Calvinists required their

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pastors to confess the finger of God in every word of the Bible.

“It is no disparagement of the greatness of Martin Luther to say that he came upon the scene too soon to accomplish a genuine and thorough-going reformation of religion. He was not to blame for that. If his famous theses could have been nailed on the doors of Wittenberg Cathedral at about the time, let us say, that Halley was figuring the orbit of his equally famous comet, the situation in the religious world might be very different today. The dogmatic mind was then, for the moment, loosened up. The critical spirit of science and the new humanistic spirit were abroad in the life of the eighteenth century. The theological world might then have really assimilated the new science and the new philosophy and given us some sort of consistent world-view that should include everything. At the very least, something of the new learning might have so penetrated into the old theology—that Protestant thought would have looked forward instead of backward.

“But as it was, the church and the new world failed to synchronize. Protestant thought crystallized into its creeds and doctrines nearly two hundred years too soon, with the inevitable

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result that it did not change, but only perpetuated, the old theology of the Middle Ages. The Protestant Reformation proved only a false dawn, and the one great fact that the present war within the churches reveals is that the whole reforming job has to be done over again from the bottom. The only question is whether the second reformation, unpleasant as it will undoubtedly be, shall be gone through with now, or again postponed to "a more convenient season," when, indeed, it may be too late."

Another tragic weakness in the Reformation that is clearly apparent today lies in the fact that its principles and ruling ideas led to a divorce between religion on the one hand, and science, art and social effort on the other. This was bound to result increasingly in a separation of religion from the whole, all-around life of men, with the result that Protestantism has become thin and superficial and out of vital touch with man's deepest thought, his sense of appreciation of the beautiful, and his social aspirations and strivings. At the close of the Middle Ages the Catholic Church had appropriated and made its own the Aristotelian science which was the only science of that time. It knew no conflict between "science and religion"; it did not seek

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to belittle or set aside the function of reason in religion. It accepted reason fully and gladly, and through reason it worked out its great systems of scholasticism, notably that of Thomas Aquinas, in which Roman Catholic theology was frankly based on the Aristotelian science. Martin Luther, on the other hand, derided reason; he called it "that little hag," and he referred contemptuously to the mind as "that old strumpet." Not reason but faith, and a blind faith at that,—the blinder it was, the better for religion,—was to be henceforth the guiding principle in religion; and the Dr. Stratons of present-day Protestantism are the logical descendants of Martin Luther in their hostility to reason.

In the same way, the Catholic Church accepted art in its many different forms and employed it in enriching and ennobling the life of religion. It eagerly sought out the great artist, it subsidized him and set him to work in architecture, in painting, in sculpture. It gave to the world the noble cathedrals of Europe, the beautiful paintings and the magnificent statues, which we journey afar to see and admire. If the Church's patronage of art and the artist limited the range of art during the Middle Ages, it nevertheless resulted in a vast enrichment of religion, both

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in its thought and practise. Protestantism, however, from the beginning, has spurned art even as it has derided reason. If reason was of the Devil, art belonged only to this Devil's world, and the heart of the true believer must be set on the beauties and joys of "the other world beyond this vale of tears." Protestantism as a whole has been ascetic as the Catholic Church never was. Under Puritanism in England, religion was denuded of the beautiful in every form. Churches were ugly, statues and paintings were a sacrilege, music was a sin, the services were barren and cold, preaching was formal and austere. Only recently have the Protestant churches dared to employ some of the beautiful things of life from which Protestantism had divorced religion.

The Catholic Church also believed firmly in the organic conception of religion, rather than in the individualistic. The Church was the Kingdom of God on earth; it was gradually to spread until it embraced all mankind. It held that the spiritual was above all civil authority, that God was the real ruler of this world, and that, therefore, religion was vitally concerned with all that had to do with the life of men. This viewpoint leads up to our modern conception of social

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religion far more truly than does the general official teaching of Protestantism, which has never tried to grasp, until quite recently, the organic conception of religion. The whole trend of Protestant Christianity may be said to rest upon the idea that the world is not only too much *with* us, but also too much *for* us. The promise of a day of judgment when "the last shall be first" is the open confession that the business of religion is not to save the world,—for that is hopeless,—but only to save as many individuals as possible, and see them safely through this wicked world to some distant heaven of bliss, while the world itself goes down to utter destruction. The difficulty that every preacher of social religion has in keeping his pulpit in even the more liberal churches only proves how out of harmony social religion is with the fundamental principles of Protestantism. The "End of the World" sermons, and the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, which play so large a part in the preaching of the fundamentalists, only prove that they have never grasped the idea that religion is to save and transform this world here and now.

With this divorce of religion from reason and science, from art, and from any intelligent social

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striving, is it any wonder that Protestantism as a whole has gradually lost its hold upon the intellectual classes on the one hand, and the working classes on the other? Is it strange that religion as taught in so many of the churches seems like a little back-water, far away from the main stream of life? Should we be surprised that to an increasing number of people religion seems to deal only with the outer fringe of life, and not with its central needs and problems? Or, should we wonder that a religion presented in terms of a pre-scientific and obsolete theology should offer no appeal whatever to the young men and women of the new generation who have been educated to the modern world-view, who have caught more or less of the scientific spirit, and whose sympathies go out more or less intelligently to the great social movements of this modern age? It is such conditions that have forced the present issue upon the churches,—an issue that it would be criminal to postpone any longer.

If these considerations throw any light upon the underlying causes of the war within the churches, let us now proceed to summarize the weaknesses of both fundamentalists and modernists,—weaknesses that have led to the precipitation of the conflict in its present form.

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The fundamentalist rejects reason in religion and substitutes for it what he calls "faith." But he does not use the word, "faith," as expressing the sum total of a man's final attitude toward the universe and life. By "faith" he means a blind acceptance of the literal authority of statements made in a certain book,—the Bible,—and the equally blind and unreasoning acceptance of particular interpretations of these statements found in doctrines formulated by the Councils of the Church. This attitude means the closing of the door on the spirit of free inquiry, the negation of any critical investigation, the obstinate refusal to accept the conclusions of modern science as they apply directly to theology, and the utter abandonment of the search for truth in the sphere of religion. In an age that glorifies science, that is characterized through and through by the spirit of free inquiry, that is bent on the fullest possible investigation of everything traditional, even those things regarded as most "sacred," that is compelled to the search for truth as the only source of the solution of the complex problems that confront mankind,—in such an age, is there any possible hope for a religion that rejects reason, that refuses the new learning, that turns its back deliberately on

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everything that most deeply and most nobly characterizes this modern age? To ask this question is to answer it for all intelligent men and women. If fundamentalism is to persist in religion, the churches will be left to the ignorant, the untrained, and the superstitious, and the main stream of life will flow on without them.

Growing out of this attitude lies another grave weakness of fundamentalism. It is static rather than dynamic. It rejects any possibility of progress either in knowledge or in morals. It would hold the world to the present *status quo*. In an age when everything is in flux,—when political governments are weakening, and social institutions are crumbling, and moral ideals are changing, and educational systems are being radically modified, and the whole of our industrial civilization is being gradually transformed, the fundamentalist would keep the church intact *just as it has been* in form and teaching. In a constantly changing world it would hold religion rigidly static and unchanged. The present conflict in the churches only proves how utterly futile all such attempts must be in a world like ours. If there is to be growth, there must be change. If progress is to be made there must constantly be the passing

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away of the old, and the coming of new knowledge. Life, just because it is life, consists of continual readjustments, as conditions change and new light comes. To remain static, to refuse to make the new readjustments, is to cease to live. All static things are dead things; they only cumber the ground and should be put out of sight as speedily as possible. When intelligent men see clearly that the only hope of the future lies in the full and free assimilation of the new knowledge in religion as well as everywhere else, and in the achieving of a new and nobler morality than the past has ever known, what place or influence can a static church have in the future?

When fundamentalism confesses that the world is too much for us, and all that is left us is to save our own little souls and get them out of this Devil's world as quickly as possible, it espouses a narrow and selfish individualism that is utterly foreign to the social spirit that is at last awake in the world. The "other-worldliness" of fundamentalists is even farther away from this modern age than the golden streets and jasper walls of their distant heaven. If religion cannot bring to bear upon the problems of disease, of poverty, of war, of injustice and wrong

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of every kind, a practical moral idealism that it also knows how to apply intelligently to the world that is, if it cannot bring a quickening spirit of lofty enthusiasm and confident hope to the cynicism and pessimism of today, if it cannot lead the way to the establishment,—perhaps far off,—of God's kingdom here upon earth, then religion has no reason for existence. And more than that, if anything stands out more clearly than all else it is that we shall never save our own souls, here or hereafter, except in just the degree that we lose ourselves in helping to build that better world for men.

There is one other thing in fundamentalism that seems to be a defect of temperament more than anything else, and that makes it seem hopeless to look for any speedy ending of the conflict. The fundamentalist seems to be lacking in a sense of imagination. There is little or no poetry in his soul, or, at least, he finds no poetry in his religion; it is all dogma, and prose dogma at that. If he could only read his Bible and see these stories as they really are,—beautiful poetry,—instead of missing the poetry utterly and making of it all only hard literal prose, how different his view of religion might be!

But if these weaknesses of the fundamentalist

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position have made inevitable the present outbreak of the conflict, the modernists are equally responsible for the present situation. In his introduction to "Painted Windows," Kirsopp Lake calls attention to the fact that the modernists or liberals in the church fall into two distinct groups. There is a left wing, which speaks frankly, with clearness and decision. Once convinced that a doctrine or belief is obsolete or false, the members of this left wing discard it. They do not attempt to cloak their non-conformity behind the futile effort to "re-state" or revamp the old doctrine. They frankly let it go and leave it out of their preaching. The members of this left wing, because of their outspoken honesty, sometimes lose their pulpits by expulsion by "the powers higher up," as in the case of Dr. Crapsey of Rochester. More often they are crowded out by the sentiment raised against them; occasionally, because of peculiarly favorable circumstances, such as an unusually intelligent or influential congregation, or a strong personal following, they are able to retain their pulpits, at least for a considerable time.

And, then, there are the right wing modernists, whom Kirsopp Lake describes as follows: "There is probably little difference in the mat-

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ter of private belief between them and the left wing, but they are more concerned with safeguarding the unity of the church. They endeavor to do this by using the old phraseology with a new meaning, so that, for instance, members of this party feel justified in stating publicly that they accept the old creed, though they admit that they do not believe in it in the sense which was originally intended. This is technically called 'reinterpreting,' and by a sufficient amount of adroit 'reinterpreting' all the articles of the creed can be given whatever meaning is desired. . . . Performed with skill, this dialectical legerdemain is very soothing to a not unduly intelligent congregation and prevents any breach in the continuity of the Church's belief."

These words of Professor Lake give us a fairly accurate picture of the right wing modernists, who considerably outnumber the left wing in the churches, and whose attitude, however they may seek to justify it to themselves, is far more responsible in the minds of the intelligent public for the Churches' loss of intellectual integrity and moral honesty than are all the absurd and unscientific statements of men like Dr. Straton. I would not question the personal sincerity of any man, and I know full well the subtle

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arguments that this right wing modernist employs to justify him in remaining in a church in whose creed and ritual he no longer believes, however he may "accept them in principle." Whatever he may label this mental attitude or however satisfying to himself his motives, the fact is clear today that an increasing number of intelligent men and women are calling it, in their thoughts if not in words, by that ugly name, "hypocrisy." This policy has involved for the right wing modernist, almost unconsciously, an evasion of vital issues rather than a frank facing of them, a covering up of distinctions with specious phraseology, a glozing over of contradictions, a lulling to sleep of the minds that have begun to question and doubt.

During the last generation the religious reading public has been flooded with books, sermons, magazine articles of all kinds, by modernists of this type, all devoted to the "reconciling process." To many laymen and laywomen in the churches whose mental training and equipment did not permit them to formulate a new philosophy for themselves more in accordance with the new knowledge pressing in on every side, this method of dealing with the problems served for a time to quiet doubts and conciliate minds that were

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growing restless. But the tragedy of the situation is revealed today in the fact that this policy of temporizing, evading and glozing over the real questions involved has left the bulk of the membership of all the churches uneducated and utterly unfit and unprepared to face intelligently the controversy that has arisen.

It is not in the spirit of condemnation but rather of deepest pity that we point out these facts. The minister himself, trained to the modern viewpoint in college or university, at the beginning equipped with the materials for a thoroughly modern faith but shrinking from the hazard and labor of frankly speaking it, now in this critical hour finds his leadership hedged about with inhibitions of various kinds which he cannot break through, and in this crucial hour to which all the churches have now come, he finds in his care a congregation utterly without understanding, which would be equally responsive to the appeal of reactionism and fundamentalism, on one side, or modernism on the other. If all modernists had been of the left wing variety, the present situation might not have arisen in the form it has taken, or if it had come, the rank and file of the membership of the churches would have been able to face it with intelligence

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and decision. As it is, multitudes are in utter confusion of mind as to which side of the controversy they ought to take. The veil has now fallen from this whole specious method of dealing with truth in religion. What we are now witnessing is only the inevitable penalty that must sooner or later be paid as the price for holding one set of beliefs privately, as esoteric, and teaching, either openly or by implication, an entirely different set of views.

Eventually, *the truth will out*, in religion as well as everywhere else. The war within the churches today means at bottom that the time of neutrality is past. Evasion, sophistry, specious arguments, "reinterpretations," conciliations, that have succeeded thus far in postponing the real issues, will no longer suffice. Two different worlds have crashed, the world of tradition and the world of modernism. One is scholastic, static, authoritarian, individualistic; the other is vital, dynamic, free, social. There is a clash here as profound and grim as that between Christianity and paganism. Amiable words and pious resolutions can no longer hide the differences. The churches can sing until doomsday, "Blest be the tie that binds," but it can never bind these two different worlds together. We might

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as well face the facts. The God of the fundamentalist is one God; the God of the modernist is quite another. The supernatural, dogmatic Christ of the fundamentalist is one Christ. The historic Jesus of Nazareth of the modernist, with his great message and his spirit of love, is quite another. The infallible Bible of fundamentalism is one Bible; the Bible of the modernist, that has given to the world the great literature of a unique people, is quite another. The ideas of the church, of the kingdom of God, of salvation, of the consummation of all things,—these are one thing to fundamentalists, and entirely different things to modernists. Christianity cannot endure half fundamentalist and half modernist. It must become either all one thing or all the other.

Glenn Frank in a recent editorial in *The Century* states the case clearly, when he says: "Modernism in religion has not been, up to date, a particularly effective movement. Of necessity it has had to pass through its negative phase. We must wage war against the false gods before we can release and make clear the new gods. And war, even in a good cause, is always a spiritually destructive thing. We must pay the price of a period of idol-breaking before we can realize

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the community of free spirits. But the liberal churches together with the new knowledge of science have done a pretty thorough job of iconoclasm. The old idols of pagan theology that have been binding the churches to a dead past have been pretty thoroughly pounded until they are cracked and tottering. If the modernists of both wings will now dare to come out into the open, if they will stand together without fear or equivocation, if they will cease to be mere critics and will have the courage and intelligence to become crusaders of a new and positive religious faith, if they will take the raw materials of a genuine religious liberalism that are today lying all about us in confusion, and challenge and blend them together in a constructive religious philosophy, touched into life by enthusiastic and aggressive leadership, they can usher in a new and glorious day for religion. It will be far from smooth sailing for the new reformation. It may, for a time, have to cry its message from street corners or from secular platforms, but if so, it will not be the first time that real religion has been driven from the churches and synagogues."


What this age hungers for is a positive faith that will, as Kirsopp Lake puts it, "satisfy the soul of the saint, without disgusting the intellect

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of the scholar." I am neither a saint nor a scholar, but that is the kind of a faith I am looking for; that is the faith we are all seeking, just because we belong to this modern age, with all its confusion of thought and all its uncertainty in belief. It is a new synthesis of religion with science and art that is so sadly needed today, a synthesis of free research, imagination and faith which the modern world is so blindly seeking. To achieve this new synthesis, now that the hour has struck in the struggle within the churches, is the solemn and glorious task imposed upon all modernists, whether within or without the churches, for upon what we do now depends the religion of the future.

III

THE DOCTRINES IN DISPUTE: WHERE IS THE TRUTH?

MID the many questions of difference between fundamentalists and modernists, both ecclesiastical and theological, I imagine the average man and woman is preëminently interested in finding out where the truth really lies. Is it possible, amid all the smoke and din of controversy, to separate the essential from the unessential, the permanent from the transitory, the truth from the error, and thus to obtain a clear understanding of the real issues involved? In attempting this delicate task I would avoid everything savoring of dogmatism. The writer was born and reared in the atmosphere of orthodoxy, but from the time he entered college he ceased to believe in the old doctrines as interpreted by the fundamentalists. In attempting to answer the question, Where does the truth lie? I am therefore, simply bringing you those conceptions of the truth to which

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my own experience has led me through these years,—the result of my study and reading, my observation and reflection and thought. I am speaking, therefore, for myself, and in no sense for others. We are all seekers after the truth, but we do not always see things eye to eye; and this should not be necessary if we accept the principle that accords to every individual full and complete liberty of thought on all questions of belief.

There are four of the old doctrines that seem to be chiefly involved in the present controversy within the churches: (1) The Infallibility of the Bible, (2) The Virgin Birth of Jesus, (3) The Physical Resurrection of Jesus, and (4) The Second Coming of Christ. For some reason we have heard very little of the Doctrine of the Atonement, although a generation ago a fierce controversy was waged around this particular belief of the churches, and, of course, the fundamentalists hold as tenaciously to the old doctrine of Vicarious Sacrifice as they do to these other doctrines about which there has been most discussion.

Before beginning our search for the truth in these old doctrines, however, I want to emphasize two general principles which may help to clarify

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our minds as we approach the specific problems. And the first principle is this. *The truth of religion does not lie on either side in this controversy.* These four doctrines that are being so hotly debated today are *theological*, not *religious* questions. As such, they do not touch the heart of religion. Theology belongs to the intellectual realm, religion to the realm of the spirit. As Dr. Parkhurst pointed out so clearly in a recent public address, religion is an experience, theology is man's rationalization about that experience. The experience persists; our rationalizations, or theologies, are constantly changing. The form our theologies take grows, or should grow, naturally out of the degree of mental, moral and spiritual development that we have attained, out of the actual knowledge we possess of the universe, of life, of ourselves and of our fellows. There are multitudes of people who know the experience and who live daily the religious life, but who are utterly ignorant of all theology and who could not define a single doctrine of the creeds. On the other hand, there are multitudes who are letter-perfect in their knowledge of the creeds but who know little or nothing about real religion.

For those who like to reflect upon such ques-

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tions, or whose mental habits run in the direction of rationalization, some sort of a theology is inevitable; but for many others of a different mental make-up, theology plays no essential part whatever in their religious lives. If discussing, debating and arguing theological questions appeals to you as interesting or worth-while, then that is the sort of thing you like; but the thing to keep constantly in mind is that intellectual ideas or beliefs *about religion* in no sense constitute religion, neither do they necessarily lead to religion. In fact, the present controversy with its criminations and recriminations, its bitterness and lack of sympathetic understanding on both sides, proves only too clearly that theology as such, whatever its brand may be, is apt to lead away from the true religious spirit, and become the utter negation of the religious ideals.

As these four doctrines are being debated today within the churches they are purely theological questions; their religious value or meaning is scarcely being considered, and, to the great majority, is completely lost sight of. This is only another way of saying that they are being debated, pro and con, merely as questions of fact. As such, science has rendered a verdict that is opposed to the verdict of the old theology.

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The fundamentalists accept the facts declared in the old theology, while the modernists accept the facts as revealed by science. The difference of opinion between fundamentalists and modernists as to the facts, therefore, is simply the difference between science and tradition. Let me illustrate my meaning more clearly.

The question of the infallibility of the Bible, as it is being discussed, is a question of fact. The Bible is either infallible, that is, without error of any kind, or it is not. According to the science of historical and literary criticism, both internal and external evidences make it utterly impossible for the intelligent man to accept the Bible as an inerrant Book, and therefore as infallible. The Bible nowhere claims infallibility for itself, and the idea of infallibility as applied to the Bible is a late addition to theology, having its origin at the time of the Reformation when the Protestants threw off the yoke of an infallible church. The limits of space forbid the mentioning of specific cases of error to be found in the Bible, but the books that contain the conclusions of historical and literary criticism, by the foremost Biblical scholars, are easily available to all. According to these conclusions, the Bible contains historical, scientific and chronological er-

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rors and inaccuracies that are incompatible with the idea of infallibility, and even the moral ideals of the later portions of the Bible contradict and go way beyond those of the earlier portions. This is perfectly natural and inevitable, when we remember that the books of the Bible are the product of more than twelve hundred years of the life and experience of the Hebrew people, and were written by many different people and under very different conditions. The fundamentalists simply reject all these scientific facts *in toto*, and continue to declare the infallibility of the Bible in spite of the facts, which anyone can ascertain for himself.

In the same way, Biblical scholarship has made clear that there is no historical basis for the Virgin Birth stories. Literary criticism has shown from the internal evidences of the Gospel narratives themselves that the Birth stories as recorded in Matthew and Luke are in no sense integral parts of the narratives, that in both Gospels they stand in actual contradiction to the genealogical chapters that precede them, that the Birth stories in Matthew cannot be made to harmonize with those in Luke, that they are later additions to the original Gospel narrative, and that their literary style stamps them clearly as

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being purely poetic conceptions. Besides, we know that the natural and common way for the ancient and pre-scientific mind to account for any unusually great and noble character was to affirm of him a virgin birth. This was the case with Buddha, with Plato, with Cæsar Augustus and others. Biology and the modern scientific conception of the reign of natural law also make it extremely difficult, if not quite impossible, for the modern mind to believe that any being, however great, has ever come into this world except through the natural and biological process of generation and birth. As the Virgin Birth is being discussed in the churches today, it is simply a question of fact. From the viewpoint of science,—biological, historical and literary,—the facts are all against the historicity of the Birth stories. The modernist is inclined to accept the facts of science, though occasionally he appears to be uncertain; the fundamentalist, on the other hand, still clings to his blind faith in the literalness of the stories, in spite of all the facts disclosed.

The physical resurrection of Jesus is also being debated as a question of fact. Historical and literary criticism make clear that the various stories of the resurrection conflict with one

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another, that they contain discrepancies that can hardly be harmonized by the disinterested mind, that Paul, the earliest writer on the subject, categorically denied any physical resurrection, and in his well-known fifteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians, frankly disclaims any belief in the resurrection of Jesus's physical body, though he believes profoundly in his spiritual resurrection. From the biological view-point, dead bodies remain dead; they do not come to life again after being in the tomb for three days, whatever may become of the spirit. Science recognizes the fact of resuscitation, but that is a very different thing. In the one case a body, never really dead, is revived; in the other case, a dead body is literally brought back to life; this last is what the physical resurrection of Jesus means to the fundamentalist; and this, with its idea of the universality of law, science knows nothing about. According to these stories which the fundamentalist accepts literally, after spending forty days upon the earth, the physical Jesus ascends into heaven and the watchers see his physical body disappear in the air over their heads. There are a number of serious difficulties in the literal acceptance of the ascension. We should be obliged to believe that the law of gravitation was set

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aside in order to allow a body, heavier than air, to rise toward the skies. Jesus's body would have had to penetrate through the fifty miles of the earth's atmosphere before it would reach the open stretches of space. He would then have been some twenty odd millions of miles from the nearest planet. How far would he have had to rise before entering "heaven"? According to the beliefs of that day, the earth was stationary, heaven was just a few miles over-head, and hell was underneath. But with our knowledge that the earth is revolving at a terrific rate of speed, if "heaven" is a localized place in space, it will sometimes be above, sometimes below, depending upon the position of the earth at any particular moment. So that if one could ascend into heaven by arising above the earth, the ascension would have to be very carefully timed. I raise these questions seriously, simply because there are so many people who think they believe in these literal stories who have never stopped to ask what is really involved in them.

The doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ is based on a few isolated and rather obscure passages in which the language is highly figurative and which lends itself naturally to various kinds of meaning. Both pre-millennialists and post-

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millennialists base their opposing interpretations on the same passages. According to these passages, in that great day, the heavens will be rolled back like a scroll, and Jesus will appear seated on the clouds, surrounded by cohorts of angels, whence he will proceed to judge the earth; the wicked will be destroyed and the saints will reign with him forever and ever. Literary criticism reveals the fact that all such passages belong to what is called "apocalyptic literature"; it is all symbolical and was never intended to be interpreted literally, as the fundamentalists accept it. While the doctrine refers to a future event yet to take place, science has nothing directly to say about this doctrine as science does not deal in "futures" of any kind. But it is obvious that the whole spirit of science, with its ruling conceptions of the universe and the reign of law, is entirely opposed to the possibility of any such catastrophic event.

Now, what I want to make clear is, that in all I have said on these four doctrines, around which the controversy is now raging, I have been dealing with them simply as questions of fact, as this is the view-point from which they are now being discussed. On the one hand, there are the traditional facts which underlie the old doc-

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trines and which the fundamentalist holds most strenuously and for which he is contending most vigorously. On the other hand, there are the facts of science which no modern man can ignore, and which have been making it increasingly difficult for intelligent minds to longer accept the traditional doctrines. From the view-point of science, there can be no longer any shadow of doubt, these old traditional doctrines as they have come down to us from the past and as they have been generally interpreted in the past are not *factually true*. If one accepts the findings of science he cannot, honestly or consistently, accept the "facts" of these old doctrines in the sense that the fundamentalist accepts them. If he accepts the fundamentalist's view of these doctrines, then he must deliberately, or ignorantly, shut his eyes to the clear facts that science has revealed. Whether one accepts the scientific or the traditional view depends upon the individual and his general mental outlook.

But having said this, I want to repeat again for the sake of emphasis: Whichever view we hold has nothing whatever necessarily to do with religion. Theology is supposed to deal with facts, religion is an experience. In our theology we may be fundamentalist or modern, orthodox

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or heretic, old theology or new, and whatever we are, we may be altogether religious or altogether lacking in religion; theology and religion are in no sense identical and should never be confused, the one with the other. The tragedy of the present situation lies in the fact that the controversy deals so exclusively with questions of theology that the eyes of multitudes are blinded to the real essentials of true religion.

The second principle I want to emphasize has to do with *the difference between facts and truth*. A statement which agrees with an outward and objective existence is a fact, or more accurately, it is the statement of a fact. A statement which agrees with a subjective and invisible principle is a truth. Strictly speaking, truth includes fact, that is, all correct statements of fact are true; but all truths are not fact. It is a fact that Cæsar crossed the Rubicon; it is a truth that God is love. The one statement is in harmony with an objective existence; the other is in harmony with a subjective principle. Take, for example, the old story of Prometheus which has found its chief literary expression in the great tragedy of Aeschylus, entitled, "Prometheus Bound." According to the story, Prometheus stole the divine fire from the gods, and as a

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punishment for his daring he was doomed to be chained to a rock from which there was no escape, and where the vultures gnawed constantly at his vitals. In literature we call this story of Prometheus "a myth." But what is a myth? It is an attempt of a primitive people to state an abstract truth in concrete form. For primitive peoples, like children, cannot conceive an abstract truth; they can conceive it only in concrete illustration. Sometimes to express such truths they take a legend, pour the truth into it, and it becomes a mythical legend; sometimes they invent the story to interpret the truth,—it is then a mythical poem or fiction. A myth, therefore, is not fact, but it may contain truth. The Promethean myth contains no actual facts, but it reveals a great truth which, in its simplest form is this: Humanity, like Prometheus in the old story, has aspired through the light of intelligence to become even as the gods. But it finds itself chained fast by ignorance and superstition, by selfishness and greed, by tyranny and oppression in a hundred forms, and yet, humanity never gives up the struggle to shake itself free from these shackles that bind and keep it back from the heights it has descried in vision. The gnawing vultures are only the vivid symbol

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of that spiritual anguish that every man and woman endures in the consciousness of the wide gulf that ever exists between the flying ideal and the lagging real,—between things-as-they-are and things-as-they-ought-to-be. It is this truth contained in the old myth that stirs the heart as we read the tragedy of Aeschylus today.

This is why we study the old folk-lore, the legends and myths of early peoples; not because they give us facts, but because they enshrine truths that these early peoples had grasped but which they were unable to express in abstract form. Legend, myth, poetry,—these were the earliest, and the natural forms in which the ancient mind gave expression to the truths it perceived; and this is why we reverence today every legend and myth from the past, and seek to interpret its symbolic meaning. But the same principle holds of all great poetry, modern as well as ancient, of all great fiction, of all allegorical writing like that of James Branch Cabell. We do not read poetry or fiction or allegory for facts, but in just the measure that they are great literature, we do find in them truths as well as beauty. And the world would be impoverished immeasurably if we should rule out of life and

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of literature all that was not based on actual, literal fact.

Now for the application of our principle. These old doctrines we have been considering and that play so central a part in the present controversy, from the literary and scientific view-point are pure myths, that is, they are not based on facts as such; we of the modernist or scientific view-point do not seek to find facts in them; in the factual sense they are no longer true for us. But this is not to say that, therefore, they are wholly false and without meaning. Like all myths, they may enshrine truth, even great truth for us who accept the scientific view-point as to their statement of "facts." If we are honest, we must say very frankly we do not believe these doctrines. In their literal sense they do not contain facts for us. But, unless our minds and souls are absolutely devoid of all poetry, we must say just as frankly, behind the myth which these doctrines disclose, or contained within it, we do see the truth and we seek to interpret its meaning for our life today. With these two principles clearly in mind let us now proceed to discover where the truth really lies in these old myths. What is the religious value of these particular doctrines?

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1.—*The Infallibility of the Bible.* We have freed our minds of all idea of an infallible book. We have accepted the findings of science as to the many errors of various kinds which the Bible contains. Does it therefore follow that the Bible has lost all meaning for us, that it no longer contains truth for our minds and hearts? Let us see. The Bible is primarily a book of history, both in the old and new Testaments. We cannot understand it unless we see it in this light. There are three kinds of history; the factual, the philosophical and the epic. Factual history undertakes simply to tell the facts. The writer of such history cares about nothing else. He does not inquire what the facts signify; what is their human interest, what is their moral meaning; he only seeks to know what is the fact, and he will sometimes spend weeks or even months in the investigation of a single date in order to secure accuracy in his facts. The best illustration of factual history is found in an official report of a department or in the records of a census.

The philosophical historian is one who is interested in facts chiefly because they illustrate or enforce some theory. The facts are not ends in themselves; they are simply instruments in his

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hands; he summons his facts as a lawyer calls his witnesses, that they may testify on his behalf. Few scholars would go to Buckle's "History of Civilization" to get an accurate statement of the facts of the periods with which he dealt. Buckle wished to demonstrate a certain theory of civilization, and with great ingenuity he brought together the facts that had a bearing on that theory. He wrote a philosophical history.

Somewhere between these two is what may be called epic history. The epic historian is not interested in mere facts nor has he some particular theory which he wishes to demonstrate. He is interested in certain phases of human life, and he uses the facts of history as the dramatist uses the creations of his imagination, to interpret human life. Froude's "Life of Erasmus" is a good illustration of epic history. Now the history of ancient times was epic history. The ancient peoples did not discriminate carefully between facts and fiction, between observation and imagination, between what they had seen and what they pictured to themselves. They knew nothing whatever about writing factual or scientific history. Their poetry, therefore, is historical poetry, having its roots in history; and their his-

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tory is poetical history, portrayed for the purpose of interesting their readers in certain phases of human life. The historicity of the siege of Troy has been pretty well established by Dr. Schliemann's investigations; but to what extent Homer's representation of the facts of that siege is historically correct it is impossible to determine.

On the other hand, Herodotus, who is called the "father of history," writes for a purpose. He does not hesitate to use tradition, story, legend, fiction, myth,—anything that will help to make his history interesting. His purpose is not factual,—to tell just what happened; neither is it philosophical,—to demonstrate a theory; his purpose is to illustrate certain phases of Greek life and character in which he is profoundly interested,—to make clear to all time the renown of the Greek people.

To this class Hebrew literature belongs. The Bible histories are epic histories. The various writers were interested in one phase of human life that may be summed up in the single sentence, God is in his world. They believed in a living God who dwelt with his people, in a God who was a righteous being, and who demanded righteousness and nothing else from his people.

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They believed in the faith of the prophets that Jehovah was able to pluck up and pull down, or to plant and to build the nation at his own will. They saw in the history of their own people the witness of the presence and the power of this living God. They did not write factual history, nor philosophical history, but epic history, —and epic history from the moral and religious view-point. This is what gives to the Biblical literature its peculiar character. It is of all literature the most religious, because of all other histories, ancient or modern, it endeavors to interpret the part the living God took in the history of a great and peculiar people.

When we clearly grasp this view of the Bible, we are set free from the slavery of the letter, and are enabled to appreciate its spirit. We do not go to the Bible for historical accuracy, or scientific knowledge, or moral philosophy as such. The Bible is one of the greatest books in all literature dealing with the moral and religious life. As Matthew Arnold somewhere says: You might as well expect a man with a sense for literature refusing to cultivate it by reading the great literature of the Greeks, or a man with the sense for art failing to cultivate it by studying the great paintings of earlier times, as to expect a man with

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a sense for the moral and spiritual life refusing to cultivate it by reading the Bible. The great characters of the Bible, epic though the narratives are, are full of inspiration and of warning even for today. The great poetry of the Bible still breathes the universal aspiration of the human heart. The Gospel narratives, regardless of their historical accuracy, possess a simplicity and a beauty of which we never tire. The matchless parables of Jesus reveal truths that no man can deny. And the burning messages of the Hebrew Prophets or the lofty idealism of a Paul or John still stir the heart and arouse the soul of the most modern man alive. As the great literature of a people "gifted with a genius for religion," the Bible reveals the struggle of this people with the moral and spiritual problems that in some form confront all earnest men and women. The Bible is "inspired" for me in just the degree that it inspires me to nobler striving and better living; it is the great book of conduct. But its "inspiration" is no whit different in kind than that which I find in the sacred scriptures of other peoples; nay more, it is the same inspiration that I find in the great poet, the great novelist, the great philosopher, of any age or clime, whose writings arouse in me new strivings toward the heights of

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character. This, perhaps, may suggest the religious value of the Bible, of which the doctrine of the Bible's infallibility is only the merest symbol. In refusing to accept the doctrine of an inerrant book, we also refuse to reject whatever of truth or beauty or inspiration the Bible may contain. In striking off the shackles of the letter we enter into the freedom of the spirit in our appreciation of this great literature.

2.—*The Virgin Birth of Jesus.* In accepting the verdict of historical and literary criticism as well as that of biology, that Jesus was born of a human father and mother like the rest of us, does it follow that the greatness of his character is therefore dimmed, or that his teachings have lost their power, as the fundamentalists would have us believe? What are the religious values of the beautiful Birth stories, even after we have discarded them as factual history? If we were to open the pages of the Gospel narratives for the first time with our minds absolutely free from all the theological implications that have been put upon their statements, and with our modern knowledge of the epic or poetic form in which the histories of early times invariably found expression, also remembering that a Virgin Birth was the usual way in which the ancient mind was

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able to account for the truly exceptional character, what would be our impressions?

Would we not feel at the outset that here was a man who, early in his life, took his place with the great prophets, seers and reformers of every age and clime? He lived in two worlds,—the world of ideals and visions and dreams, and the world of things-as-they-are,—whereas most people, then as now, live only in one world. But, unlike the idealist of those times Jesus did not flee from the real world of men and of human problems into some desert fastness or anchorite's cave, there to spend his days alone with his dreams. He refused to turn his back upon the real world, to separate himself from the life of his fellows, to close his eyes to the wrongs and injustices under which men and women suffered. He dared what only the few great souls have dared throughout all history,—he dared to believe that the ideal world of which he dreamed and the real world in which men lived and toiled and suffered might actually approach each other, and that at length,—perhaps far off,—the two widely sundered worlds might indeed become one. And as this dream gradually took possession of his entire being it came to be the great dominating, all-compelling purpose of his life,—to make

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this ideal world real. The great decision of his life was made when he decided to stay with men and women and little children, to press his heart close to the problems they were facing, to share their bitterest lot, and to realize his dream, if at all, in men and with men and through men.

He believed in God, though he never tried to define Him nor did he waste time speculating about Him. He believed that God was the deepest life of his life, the strongest power within him, the best he knew, the highest he saw. But he also believed that what God was to him, He was to all men, and that the best and highest he knew as God could be known by all men. He believed that the true Kingdom of God was within man, —within every individual being. He dared to dedicate himself to the stupendous task of making these two worlds one simply because of his profound faith in God and man, or better still, his faith in the God in man. He refused to believe that “you cannot change human nature”; he knew the limitless possibilities of human nature and he dared to believe that the best in human nature could be discovered and developed, brought to the surface and realized, at length, in noble, unselfish character.

Just when he adopted his method for making

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these two worlds one, we do not know, but early in his ministry it is clear that he cared little about organization as such. He knew nothing about any church and he never instituted a new synagogue. He gathered a few friends about him, but they constituted a loose brotherhood rather than an organization. He never talked about theology. He never referred to any Virgin Birth. He never gave them a creed. He was their friend and companion, their teacher and guide. He talked informally, sometimes with his friends, often with small groups, and occasionally to the crowds, and his constant theme was the making real his dream of the two worlds becoming one.

He made it very clear that the forces in which men trusted were as nothing to him in the realization of his dream, that pomp and power, wealth and success as the world revered these things, had no place in his dreams. It was just as evident that he had no confidence whatever in force and violence, in armies and navies, as the solution of the world's problems. The method he taught and employed was very different. It sounded strange and foolish to the people of his day; it is just as strange and foolish to most people today. He dared to teach that moral and spiritual forces were the greatest forces in the world, and that

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some day they would supplant armies and navies. He taught that kindness and sympathy, leading to mutual understanding, would do more to establish peace than all the armies in the world. He taught that when unselfishness conquered selfishness, coöperation replaced competition, and love dispelled hate, then justice would become possible and righteousness would fill the whole earth. In a word, he taught that when men came to know themselves as brothers of all who live everywhere, then the spirit of good-will to all would dominate human lives, and peace and happiness would come inevitably to such men of good-will, and through them to all mankind.

The best part of it all is, that he himself lived his dream. He not only talked about this ideal life but he lived it every day in thought, in word and in deed. It is no wonder he "spoke with authority and not as the scribes." It is not strange that "the common people heard him gladly." Neither is it to be wondered at that gradually the powers of state and church arrayed themselves against him, for the realization of his dream meant the downfall of their petty plans. And so it was quite inevitable that one day he was led forth to the little hill called Golgotha, and there put to death between two thieves.

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As the years passed by, the love and reverence which such a personality had inspired in the hearts of the people, tremendously deepened by his tragic death, found natural and inevitable expression in many stories of what he was and what he did. These stories were told and re-told by word of mouth for more than a generation before they were reduced to any writing. In an age that knew nothing about factual history as such, all of whose historical writing was epic, in which facts mingled freely with poetry, an age that had never heard of science with its reign of law, to which everything that could not be explained was a "miracle," an age that was accustomed to account for its heroes by a virgin birth, is it strange that when finally these stories were gathered together and put into written form they should have contained fiction as well as fact, poetry as well as prose, so that what we have today in these Gospel narratives is imperishable epic, or poetic history, not one word of which would we change, but which never should be interpreted literally as we would interpret scientific history? We have in the last part of the nineteenth century a clear illustration of the way in which fancy and imagination, reverence and love combine to create stories about an exceptional character that

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may have had no basis in fact, and yet that give expression to the truth about that character. Although he died only about sixty years ago, it is well-nigh impossible today to separate fact from poetry in the many stories that have grown up about the life of Abraham Lincoln.

Where lies the truth, then, in the Virgin Birth story? Not, for us, in any literal historicity, but in the surpassing greatness of the life that called forth such a story. If we mean by "God" the highest we know and the best we can conceive, then surely "the spirit of God" dwelt in him. How could any virgin birth possibly add to the nobility of such a life? We reverence him not for his parentage or the manner of his birth, but for what he was in himself and for the truth he uttered. The Virgin Birth story, interpreted literally, as the fundamentalists interpret it, separates Jesus from the life of humanity and makes of him a fictitious being, neither altogether human nor altogether divine; this story interpreted freely and poetically makes him one with all the great religious seers and sages and prophets of the past; nay more, it makes him one with all men in whom the spirit of the highest and best is struggling for fuller, freer expression. The difference between Jesus and other men is not a dif-

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ference of birth but of spirit; it is a quantitative not a qualitative difference; the same "divine" spirit dwells in all men to some degree, that dwelt in him in a superlative degree. And that is why the human Jesus towers so far above us all in the things of the moral and spiritual life.

3.—*The Physical Resurrection of Jesus.* All that we have said of the birth stories applies to the stories of the resurrection. Regarded literally as the fundamentalist believes them, we find ourselves involved in contradictions and discrepancies, and in statements that to the modern mind seems altogether absurd and incomprehensible. Taken poetically, as the natural expression in such an age of the love and reverence which Jesus had inspired, the story of the physical resurrection reveals not a "fact," but a profound and most inspiring truth. Where is the truth? That life is mightier than death, that love is stronger than death, that the highest and best in human personality is never destroyed by death, that death itself is never the end of life but only an incident in life, that the influence of the truly noble life lives on through the ages, that what such a life really is and does remains as the permanent possession of mankind forever.

Jesus died as all men die and his body was

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reverently laid away in the Syrian tomb there to be mingled with the dust of earth, but his spirit lived on; and it still lives today as the constant source of courage and inspiration to all who would share the life of the spirit. His great dream of one day bringing this old world-as-it-is into closer harmony with the world-as-it-ought-to-be is the compelling dream of our lives today. His noble manhood shames us for our littleness, his unflagging zeal for the Kingdom of God on earth lifts us out of our self-absorption, his disinterested love leads us away from our selfishness. In just the measure that we share his spirit,—the spirit of all the great and good who have walked this earth,—do we attain to that real immortality, of which the resurrection stories are only the faintest symbol.

4.—*The Second Coming of Christ.* Where lies the truth in the old apocalyptic vision of the heavens opening and Jesus appearing in the clouds with his cohorts of angels to destroy the wicked and establish in person the reign of righteousness on earth? If the fundamentalists possessed any imagination or read these passages with any poetry in their souls how could they confuse what they accept as literal fact with the great and inspiring truth which this ancient poetry

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enshrines? If we believe that the spirit of truth and love, the spirit of justice and righteousness, the spirit of peace and good-will dwelt in him, then every truth bringer, every life that surrenders to love's power, every approach to more of justice in human relations, every rebirth of the spirit that makes for righteousness, is in reality the "coming of Christ" again. What could the personal Jesus do were he to come to earth today more than he did nineteen hundred years ago? He could teach again the same great truths, he might apply them more directly to our problems of today, he could live the life of disinterested love, but he would encounter the same opposition from the powers-that-be today that he did then, and he might meet the same fate. I say it with all reverence, it is not the personal Jesus come to earth again that the world needs today; it is, rather, the spirit of truth and love become incarnate in our lives; it is the more earnest and intelligent striving for justice on our part, it is the translation of righteousness into all the manifold relations of men and nations. Until we are ready and willing to live the true and loving, the just and righteous life ourselves, the spirit of Jesus can never come in its fulness. The truth of the old doctrine is found in every form of

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moral and social progress that has its place in the life of mankind,—a truth of which the doctrine is only the merest symbol.

Most imperfectly have I tried to suggest where the truth lies in the present controversy between fundamentalists and modernists. From the purely factual view-point, our sympathies are all with the modernists simply because we belong to this age and have inevitably been influenced, in all our thinking, by the spirit and conclusions of modern science. These doctrines as they stand and as they are believed by the fundamentalists are, frankly, only beautiful myths to us; we read them not as the record of facts but as beautiful poetry, and as such we honestly and reverently seek to find the truths they enshrine. It is the moral and spiritual values of these old doctrines that we crave, just as we seek them in all the myths that have come down from the past. And when the present storm of controversy has passed away, it will be these values that will remain as man's permanent spiritual heritage from the past. The letter killeth and must be superseded by the spirit which alone brings life.

IV

THE REALIZATION OF GOD AS CREATIVE LIFE



ONE of the most impressive things, as we trace the development of man's life on this planet, is the way in which he has continually been outgrowing his older notions of God, and yet for some reason he has never outgrown God. His ideas about God are constantly changing, being revised and left behind, and yet the idea of God persists. Again and again, men have arisen to declare that at last God had been ruled out of the Universe, and that henceforth man was to steer his course, freed from this "old superstition of the past"; and in the very generation that listened to such confident assertions, thoughtful minds have begun anew the task of reformulating their conceptions of God in closer harmony with the deepest thought of their day.

It was Emerson who said: "When the Gods arrive, the half-gods go." This is just what has been taking place ever since man, "the worship-

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ing animal," first made his appearance on this planet. Man has been constantly discovering and rediscovering God, as his experience has broadened, as his knowledge of truth has widened, as his insight into the meaning of life has deepened. Low and narrow ideas of God have ever been giving way to higher and broader ideas; inadequate and unworthy notions have disappeared with the coming of more adequate and nobler notions; imperfect and limited conceptions have vanished with the dawning of more ethical and truly spiritual conceptions.

The race has very gradually come to its knowledge of God through its slowly growing knowledge of itself, for we must not forget that every "revelation of God" which has become enshrined in the Bibles of the race, was first of all made in the inner consciousness of some individual. At last we are coming to see that "revelation" does not consist in God's removing some veil which hides Him from the searching gaze of man, but rather, in man's removing the veil from before his own eyes, which has been blinding him to the truth and beauty and goodness of God. The true God always "arrives" to take the place of the "half-gods," as man makes the discovery of his truer, deeper self.

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Everyone believes in God, and no one should refuse to assert his belief in God, simply because he cannot bring himself to believe in the God of some theologian, or as expressed in some creed. Strictly speaking, there is no such person as an atheist or infidel. Atheism and infidelism are relative, not absolute terms. A man may believe in a different God, or he may believe less or more about God than do others, but if he reflects at all he is forced to believe in "something" that constitutes God for him.

We need to remember that the real God is the God expressed in the universe and in ourselves. The God defined in the creeds is, at best, only an approximation of the real God, the outgrowth of the mental, moral and spiritual limitations of the age that produced the creed. One may think with Haeckel that the Universe is the outcome of the fortuitous interaction of material atoms, without consciousness or intelligence behind them; or one may believe that the Cosmos is the product of Mind, that "it means intensely and means good"; but whether one calls himself a materialist or an idealist, no one can help believing in the Power that is revealed in the Universe, in the Life Force out of which all-that-is has come. And this belief in a Power, or Life Force,

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even if one attempts to formulate his belief no further, is nevertheless a belief in God. For whatever else God may be, He must be the great Life Force whence all proceeds.

We are not concerned just now with the many questions that spring to the mind as soon as we begin to think about God. The theories, speculations and philosophies about God are legion, and yet the modern mind has grown less dogmatic and more humble, and is content to confess itself frankly agnostic as to many things men have glibly affirmed about God in the past. More and more it is becoming clear that we approach God more closely through feeling than through intellect, that our truest knowledge of God comes through our deepest intuitions rather than through logical processes.

To admit frankly that there are many things we do not and cannot *know* about God, is not to exhibit less but more of real faith than to seek to measure God's power with one's little yardstick or compress all the meaning of God into one's limited definitions. For every definition always defines the person who makes it far more truly than the thing defined, since our definitions do not reveal the absolute meaning of what we define nearly so accurately as they define ourselves,

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that is, our powers of perception or understanding. It is for this reason that all our definitions of God are really the expressions of the meaning of God in terms of our own mental, moral and spiritual limitations. It is thus that we are coming to see that the sense of God, or the consciousness of God, is the practically important thing for our lives, regardless of what theories we may hold or how we may formulate our philosophy about God.

To primitive man, in all his ignorance and superstition, the gods were close, near and immediate. Nature was man's first Bible; and in the sun, the stars, the waves, the storm, the rhythmic passing of the seasons—seed-time and harvest—he felt the constant presence of the Great Spirit, or of lesser spirits, and realized their ceaseless activity. And then, with the gradual building up of religious systems, God was removed farther and farther from the individual soul. Theology embalmed Him in the abstractions of the creeds; ecclesiasticism sought to shut Him up in Temples and Cathedrals and Churches; His means of communication with the soul were limited to the sacraments administered by properly ordained priests; it was decreed that worship of Him must be in accordance with certain rites and cere-

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monies; great institutions thrust themselves between the soul and God, and sought to have men believe that His relation to them was a relation of mediation, and that He never could come into direct and immediate contact with the soul. To quote from an eminent theologian: "God is a being of an essentially different nature from man, between whom and Him there is no kinship."

Every great religion has always had its beginnings in the consciousness that God was close and near and immediate, but the subsequent development of every religion has succeeded in erecting barriers between the soul and God that have served to remove Him from any vital relationship with the rank and file of persons. And so the fundamental mission of every truly great religious reformer has always been to rescue God from creeds and institutions and bibles, and reenthroned Him once again in the soul of the individual; but those who have come after, have usually succeeded in substituting the means for the end, and in making the machinery of religious organization take the place of religion, which is ever and always "the life of God in the soul of man." Man has always been his own worst enemy in religion as well as in everything else.

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And all the time that man has been saying, in his search for God, "Lo, He is here, or lo, He is there," the divine whisper has been sounding, for those who had ears to hear, "Lo, the Kingdom of God is *within you*."

It is to the credit of this modern age that the human spirit has once more risen in its strength and is determined to find God in the near and immediate. Its demand is not for a God who once was, but for a God who now is; not a God in the skies, but a God on the earth; not a God of some distant heaven, but a God whom we meet and recognize in everyday experiences. It is for this reason that so many people today are becoming increasingly impatient with creeds and dogmas, rites and ceremonies, sermons and churches. Instinctively they feel that these things do not constitute religion, and that in some way they have come between the soul and its own inalienable right of immediate access to the living God. It is nothing else than the outraged spirit in man demanding its rights with God.

He little understands the religious unrest of these times who does not see that, deeper than all else, is this well-nigh universal thirst for a real God; that is, a God who *is real*, who lives, moves and has His being in one's own personal

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experience. Just as Emerson asked the question in his Divinity School Address in 1838: "Why should *we* not have a first-hand and immediate experience of God?" so men everywhere today are crying out for an original, first-hand experience of God. Earnest souls are asking why, if God indeed be the living God, it should be necessary for men of today to derive all their knowledge of Him from ancient prophets who lived and died thousands of years ago? Do we not stand as close to the original sources of the knowledge of God as did the ancients,—the world of consciousness within and the world of nature without? Why cannot we have our own experience with God, instead of depending so wholly on second-hand experiences of others? Towards the close of his life, Tennyson once said to a friend: "My chief desire is to have a new vision of God." In these words the great poet has voiced the deepest desire of all seriously minded men and women. If we are ever to regain the "lost sense of God," which Tolstoi declared to be the fundamental need of our age, it will only be as in some way we do succeed in catching a fresh vision of God.

A few Sundays ago I listened to a sermon on the subject "What does it mean to love God?"—a sermon that was not only beautifully ex-

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pressed, but that was also profoundly suggestive—in which God was construed in terms of “*the Invisible*.” In this connection I want to ask you to think of God in terms of Creative Life, as also helping towards the new vision of God, that is so sadly needed. And I want you to think of God in these terms, not because they exhaust the meaning of God, but because they are fundamental and give an expression to the thought of God which I think we can all accept, whatever may be our different beliefs about God. At least, it may furnish a starting point from which we may pursue our quest still further.

In his striking book, “Creative Evolution,” Henri Bergson, the well-known French Philosopher, uses these words: “There is in each of us a particle of Life Force which is above intellect as much as it is above our physical powers. This Life Force which we find in every living thing must have come from a source,—you may call it God.” This *elan vital*, or Life Force of Bergson, which indwells all things, is recognized and accepted by all scientists and philosophers today, by whatever name they may call it. It is the “infinite and eternal energy from whence all things proceed” of Herbert Spencer. It is the “God in whom we live and move and have our

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being" of Paul. Suppose we take this thought of God, not as a final or exhaustive thought, but as a conception of modern thought that seeks to construe God in terms of creative life instead of in terms of the older metaphysics. Then, whatever else God may be, if He is the Creative Life in all things, what follows?

First, as respects man's relation to nature, the Creative Life of God is everywhere present. Most people still believe that some time in the far-away past, God made the world; whereas the real truth is that God is always making the world. Creation is not an act in the past, but is an eternal process that is even now taking place before our very eyes. "Through every grass-blade," says Carlyle, "the glory of the present God still beams." It is the mysterious Life Force, always at work, everywhere present, that is silently and continually doing the wondrous work of creation. It is sometimes said that the operations of nature are spontaneous; and that is exactly what they are. This is the meaning of Divine Immanence. "Spontaneous," used in this sense, does not mean at random and purposeless and undetermined; it means actuated and controlled from within by something indwelling and all-pervading and never absent anywhere. The intelligence which

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guides things is not something external to the scheme, clumsily interfering with it by muscular action, as we are constrained to do when we interfere at all; but it is something within and inseparable from it, as human thought is within and inseparable from the action of our brains.

Many are blind to the meaning,—to the fact even,—that there is a meaning in nature, just as an animal is blind to a picture and deaf to a poem; but to those whose eyes are open to see, the intelligence and purpose underlying the whole mystery of existence are keenly felt. To them, the lavish beauty of wild nature, of landscape, of sunset, of mountain and of sea are revelations of an indwelling "Presence," rejoicing in its majestic order. "There is a soul in all things and that soul is God,"—the creative life in all that is. Every atom, every germ, every living organism, from lowest to highest, has within it a principle, a life force, a purpose, even a degree of consciousness appropriate to its position in the general scheme of things. This mind, or consciousness, differs in its different manifestations, higher in the insect than in the vegetable, higher in the animal than in the insect, higher in man than in the animal, and highest of all in the great souls of the race.

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It is to be questioned how many of the boys and girls, educated today in the mechanistic conceptions of modern science, really see and feel in nature the "living Presence" that was so actual to men like Wordsworth or Ruskin or Emerson or Whitman or Jeffries, not to mention writers of an earlier day. And yet with all the light that modern science has thrown upon nature, it needs to be remembered that no scalpel has ever yet revealed the mysterious secret of life, and no laboratory has ever yet discovered the source of life. The Life Force that indwells all things is still the supreme mystery. Our knowledge of science,—Botany, Geology, Zoology, Biology, Astronomy, etc.,—has given us new classifications and descriptions, new laws and terminologies that help to explain the outside of things and of organisms, but they have not yet succeeded in explaining the inner life principle that creates things and organisms. And they need not and should not blind our eyes to the mysterious "Presence," the Creative Life of God, which meets us face to face wherever we turn in nature. When we look for it beneath the outer form,—“the garment of the Infinite,”—we do see the Divine everywhere, just because we are con-

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stantly in the presence of the Creative Life of God.

“Earth’s crammed with Heaven,
And every common bush afire with God.”

But again, as respects time, if God is the Creative Life, whatever else He may be, there is no time when He is not present in the life of humanity. There are many devout people whose sense of the presence of God seems to be almost entirely historic. They believe God was with Abraham and Moses and Joshua, with Isaiah, Amos and Micah, and that over the confused and painful wanderings of the Israelites a divine purpose presided; but in the world of today they see on every side the evidences of an evil spirit at work, with few or no signs of a divine order or “Presence” in the life of man. Carlyle, who had a keen historic sense, expressed passionately in his last years the longing that God would speak again. He could hear the divine voice speaking through Knox, Luther and Cromwell of an earlier time, but he could not detect it in the messages of Maurice or Stanley or Bright of his own day. It almost seemed to him that God had vanished out of human history when the stern soul of Cromwell took its flight.

So there are multitudes of people who believe

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in a past God, but who have a very slight consciousness of a present God. They always speak of God in the past tense. Older peoples seem to them to have been divinely led, while they stumble on blindly in a helpless confusion of aims and ideals; other ages seem to them sacred, while this age seems devoid of all divine recognition. And yet if God is the Creative Life, He has always been in the world, is just as truly and fully in the world today as He has ever been in the past. What is the essential meaning of what is going on in Ireland or Egypt or Persia or India or Russia today, if it is not to be found in the deep stirrings of the Creative Life in the hearts and minds of these peoples as they reach out, vaguely, blindly and more or less crudely—and often by methods that we could wish were otherwise—toward what they feel is a richer, fuller, freer and juster life for them and their children? How are we to interpret the deep stirrings of unrest in the industrial world, if not in terms of the same Creative Life that is seeking, in the hearts and minds of the workers of all lands, freedom from the injustices and wrongs under which they have suffered down through the centuries? What means the lofty dreams of a better World Order, in which all men and nations shall join hands

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in the common cause of service to all humanity, that are stirring in the hearts and minds of multitudes throughout the world today, except that the Creative Life is present here and now, and seeking larger and fuller expression? The history of the last few years, if we only had eyes to read it aright, would contain for us a disclosure of the Divine Will and purpose as clear and authoritative as that contained on any page of the Old or New Testaments. The difference between various ages is not that the Creative Life of God is present in a fuller degree in some than in others, but rather that some ages perceive and realize the Divine Presence more fully than do others, or because some ages are willing to become the expression of the Creative Life to a degree that others are not.

If God is the Creative Life, whatever else He may be, it is also evident that He must be present in some degree and form in the life and history of all peoples. Here in the western world we have said for centuries that God made the Jews the channel of His revelation to the world, but the Egyptian, the Phoenician, the Greek, the Roman, the peoples of India or China or Africa, worked out a purely human destiny in a purely human way. They had no inspiration from the

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Divine Spirit, and they contributed no revelation of the Divine nature. The history of the Jews, we say, therefore, is divine history, while the history of all other peoples and races is profane. But this is worse than a partial view, it is an actual kind of atheism; it sets about the Creative Life that is everywhere present, the narrow limitations of human ignorance and prejudice. For centuries Christianity has taught that it alone was the true religion and that all of the other great world faiths were false, that its prophets alone were divinely inspired while the seers and sages of other religions were inspired by the Devil, and that therefore its adherents alone would be "saved," while the adherents of all other faiths would be eternally "lost." But as we read the sacred writings of other religions to-day, we discover that all the essential teachings as to moral and spiritual values are practically the same with those of Christianity, and the great leaders of all religions are singularly at one in their ideals, their purposes and their spirit.

How preposterous seem such ideas today! In one breath, theology predicates omnipresence of God, in the next, it claims to find Him only in a "chosen people," saved out of a vast host of disinherited and rejected. It is as if one should dis-

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criminate between the children of the same family and declare that while one son bore the image of his Father, was the recipient of His love and bore his character, all the others were aliens and strangers, cut off from participation in the nature which was a common inheritance. It is such limited and unethetical notions about God that underlie so much of the racial antagonisms and prejudices and bitternesses of today that are keeping the world torn asunder in the spirit of strife. It is only as we realize that, whatever else He may be, God is the Creative Life everywhere indwelling the life of all peoples, that we can understand the words, "God hath not left Himself without a witness among any people," and those other words, "the Light that lighteth every man coming into the world." So that while we gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to the Hebrew race for its incalculable contribution to the moral and religious life of mankind, we nevertheless rejoice to find the truth, beauty and goodness of the Creative Life of God expressing itself in the life of all peoples.

Still again, if God is the Creative Life, everywhere present, then it follows that the "revelation" of God is one with life itself. To many people God reveals Himself exclusively through the

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Bible and the Church. These, they say, are the divine channels; all other channels are purely human. As we read the Bible itself, however, there is nothing to cause us to believe that the message of God came only through the men who wrote the sixty-six books of our Bible. And when we read the story of the formation of the Biblical Canon, there is no reason for believing that God ceased speaking through men when the Canon was closed. Just because God is the Creative Life, we know that He has always been speaking and must always continue to speak in countless ways and through countless lives. So we perceive God's message to man as contained in all the great Bibles of the race, in the writings of so-called heathen,—men like Seneca and Marcus Aurelius,—in the great philosophers, the great poets, the great dramatists, the great novelists. And since the Creative Life is as truly in nature as in the soul of the Prophet, the truth of science is therefore as divine and authoritative as the truth of any Bible. Any fact anywhere, if it be a fact, is a revelation of God. But the Creative Life is also revealed in all forms of art—painting, sculpture and architecture—in music that has been called “the divinest of all the arts,” in every form of activity of the human spirit.

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The whole material universe,—all history, all philosophy, all science, all literature, all art,—the entire life of man, cannot exhaust the revelation of the Creative Life that is everywhere. If we were to put into our Bibles all the great writings, prose and poetry, and all the great art of every kind through which the Creative Life has spoken directly to our souls, it would contain very much more than the present sixty-six books.

If we were truly conscious, in the deep realizing sense, that God was Creative Life, always at work and everywhere present, then every day would be for us a sacred day, every task, even the humblest, would be a divine task, and every place would be a holy place. We should feel His nearness on week-days as well as on Sunday; we should find Him in our daily work as we realized that it was God working in us and through us, whatever our task; we should know that He was present in the home, the office, the factory, the schoolroom and on the street, as truly and actually as He is in the great Cathedral or the Church. For it is not the day, nor the place, nor the task that makes sacred, but ever and alone the spirit that realizes God as Creative Life, everywhere present and always revealing itself.

But, in the last place, nowhere do we come

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closer to the real God as Creative Life than in the depths of our own consciousness, and in the lives of our fellows. The modern approach to God is not from without but from within. We do not begin first with God, as did the ancients, but with man; it is through man to God. Chronologically, God may come first, but it is not the chronological God whom we seek; it is the living God of the present who alone can satisfy man's hunger and thirst. So that we do not seek God through logical processes, and then argue from our conclusions as to God's relations to man. But we discover Him, if at all, in our own inner consciousness. We do not begin by defining Him; in fact we care less and less about any definitions of God, for we realize that every definition always leaves out more than it puts in. But we are intensely concerned with knowing, feeling, experiencing for ourselves the immediate sense of God. We are learning at last that the pathway to God lies ever and always through man's own inner being. This is not to disparage the paths that lead through nature to God; but it is to confess that no one sees clearly the paths that lead through nature, until he has first learned to walk in the pathway that lies through human nature. This explains why Prof. James speaks of "the

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gods of Nature” and the “God of the inner life,” and why Mr. Wells makes the distinction between the “Veiled Mystery” and the “God of the Heart.” For it is the Creative Life, as it finds expression in the inner life, or in the heart of man, who becomes for us the real God.

Why this should be so becomes clear when we reflect on the manifestation of Creative Life in the inner life of man. It comes welling up in us, first, as consciousness, whose mystery no man has yet fathomed. Out of this consciousness within, come all our powers of thinking and feeling and willing, which are nothing less than manifestations of the Creative Life of God, individualized in us. But wonderful as these are, it is only when we rise to the plane of the ideals, and come to realize that the power by which we create the ideal and visualize it to ourselves, the source of our aspiration toward the ideal which will not let us be content with anything less, the will by which we determine to dedicate ourselves to the realization of the ideal,—all these are the clearest and fullest expression of the Creative Life of God within ourselves. If I may state it in another way: The Creative Life of God, whether without or within, is One, but we become most fully conscious of the real God when the Crea-

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tive Life within ourselves finds expression in our ideals of the good, the beautiful and the true; and we come nearest to God when we surrender ourselves wholeheartedly to these ideals. For in the highest and most spiritual sense, God is the totality of our ideals. And what is thus true of ourselves is true of all men. The Creative Life of God dwells in every individual, as the source of consciousness, of mind, of heart, of will, but most clearly manifested in the creation of ideals and the awakening of aspiration toward those ideals. All men are, then, essentially divine, but all men are not equally conscious of the divine Creative Life within themselves, and all men do not equally surrender to its power in the creation in them of the ideals which lift man toward the divine.

“Know this, O man, sole root of sin in thee
Is not to know thine own divinity.”

Or, as Sir Oliver Lodge puts it in his “Creed of a Scientist”: “All that exists, exists only by the communication of God’s Infinite Being. All that has intelligence, has it only by derivation from His sovereign reason; and all that acts, acts only from the impulse of His supreme activity. It is He who does all in all. It is He, who, at

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each instant of our life, is the beating of our heart, the movement of our limbs, the light of our eyes, the intelligence of our spirit, the soul of our soul." Or, in the beautiful words of Josiah Royce: "God is the life of my life, the soul of my soul, the self of my self."

Now if this very imperfect but, let us hope, suggestive thought of God, as construed in terms of Creative Life, be in any sense true, how would it tend to affect our view of life? Suppose, for example, that God is not and never was the transcendent divine Being who dwelt beyond the stars, as so many of the theologians have declared. Suppose He did not create the world at some time in the past. Suppose He never has intervened from without in the world's affairs, and that the old miracles that are recorded in our Bibles are simply the stories of early, ignorant, unsophisticated and superstitious people about things that seemed strange and unnatural to them, but that would seem to us far less strange and perfectly natural if they happened now? Suppose God is the eternal Life Force that has been finding expression from the beginning of beginnings, and that has brought forth this universe, like a child born of a mother's travail, as a means to His own self-expression and self-

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realization. Suppose that this universe is as much a necessity to God as the thought of a God is necessary to us. Suppose God is the indwelling life of the universe, of the remotest star and sun as well as of our planet—the indwelling life of the clod as well as of the soul, the spirit, as Paul put it, working in and through all things. Suppose all the struggle of life, sentient and insentient, is the struggle of this Creative Life of God for a richer and fuller and completer existence. And suppose that the only way in which this Creative Life of God can find its highest and truest expression is in and through man, as man creates and surrenders himself to the real moral and spiritual values of life—the highest “revelation of God.”

Suppose modern man with his democratic strivings and his new-born social consciousness, with all his vague dreams of a better world and his aspiration toward a life in which justice may have a larger place, represents the highest that God, as Creative Life, has thus far been able to accomplish in His own self-realization through man. Suppose you and I and others like us, are the instruments and media through which He is even now seeking to realize a larger expression of His life and win greater victories in His creation.

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Suppose it is upon the mind and emotion and will which the Creative Life has brought to being in us that He depends for the greater life that is to be, and of which we sometimes think we have caught glimpses. Suppose that what God needs is not our prayers, our incense, and the easy homage of our lips, but our brains, our hearts, our wills, our very life-blood. Suppose that all the struggle we see today, and all that history reveals, and all that the past that lies behind history hides, is the process, slow and painful and costly, by which a diviner life is unfolding itself on this earth. Suppose it is only by means of this mighty struggle in which we are set—the good against the evil, the true against the false, love against hate,—that the goodness we associate with the thought of God can eventually be brought to realization and victory.

Suppose all this, I say, and is there then no ground for a new kind of faith in a new vision of God? Suppose all this, and is there not visible at once a new meaning in all the struggle and travail of life? If this were all true, would not our strivings for democracy, and the aspirations of organized labor, and every noble movement among men today have a new significance?

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Would we not then see democracy as no longer a mere political experiment, but as a mighty new uprising and outreaching of the spiritual Life Force of the universe, and the struggle of the workers as the expression of the same Creative Life that is ever seeking a fuller measure of justice and human brotherhood? If this were all true, there would no longer be any conflict between religion and science and men would recognize and accept them both as the manifestations of the Truth that is One. Then would religion and science become the mutually confirming voices, pointing the way toward "One God, One Law, One Element, and One Far-Off Divine Event, to which the whole creation moves."

Suppose all this, I have said. But is not the supposition highly probable and reasonable in the light of what we know to be the common testimony of science and knowledge, and in the light too of the stupendous problems, moral as well as physical, that are left unanswered by the older thought of God? I cannot but feel that it is along the lines of some such thought as this that the world will yet find its way to a new and more vital faith in God, and to a new and truer understanding of life and life's meaning and purpose.

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Whatever else He may be—and we have in no sense exhausted the meaning of God,—God is the Creative Life of the universe, but we know Him best in ourselves, and we find Him most truly in our highest ideals and in the ideals of the collective life of humanity. As the old proverb puts it: God sleeping in the stone, awaking in the plant, coming to faint consciousness in the animal, coming to fuller consciousness in man, and coming to fullest consciousness in the greatest souls of the race.

In the beautiful poem of William Herbert Carruth, entitled, "Each in his own Tongue," we find this conception of God expressed. In the first verse we see the Creative Life of God in its lower forms of manifestation but gradually reaching its truest expression, in the last verse, in the moral and spiritual life of those men and women who have consecrated themselves to the great ideals.

"A fire-mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jelly-fish and a saurian,
And caves where the cave-men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty
And a face turned from the clod,—
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

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A haze on the far horizon,
The infinite, tender sky,
The ripe, rich tints of the cornfields,
And the wild geese sailing high;
And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the golden-rod,—
Some of us call it Autumn,
And others call it God.

Like tides on a crescent sea-beach,
When the moon is new and thin,
Into our hearts high yearnings
Come welling and surging in;
Come from the mystic ocean
Whose rim no foot has trod,—
Some of us call it Longing,
And others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty,
A mother starved for her brood,
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
And Jesus on the rood;
And millions who, humble and nameless,
The straight, hard pathway trod,—
Some call it Consecration,
And others call it God."

V

WAS JESUS ONLY A MAN?



THE belief in the Divinity of Jesus, under various forms of the Doctrine of the Incarnation, has always held a central place in the many different schemes of Christian theology. From the theological view-point, it is this question that constitutes the real point of contention between the fundamentalists and the modernists in the churches today. And yet, it is quite obvious that the real difference is not so much in the *belief* in the Divinity of Jesus as it is in the *interpretation* of that belief.

Both Dr. Grant and Dr. Fosdick profess to believe in the Divinity of Jesus, though both have preached sermons in which they disclaim belief in the literal historicity of the virgin birth stories. These modern "heretics" base their belief in the Divinity of Jesus on what he was, what he taught and what he did, while Bishop Manning and the fundamentalists base their belief on the literal-

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ness of the stories of the virgin birth. These liberals in the orthodox churches profess to see in Jesus "a portrait," "a manifestation" or "a revelation" of God; the Bishop, on the other hand, using the exact language of the creed, claims that *Jesus was God*. To these liberals, Jesus was a divine man; to the Bishop, he was a human God.

It may seem, at first glance, as if these different interpretations constituted "a distinction without a difference," as if the whole controversy that is being waged today around the person of Jesus consisted merely in words and differences of definition in the terms used; but this is a superficial view, and those who hold it are missing the deep significance of all that is involved in the present theological controversy. The fact is that the view of Jesus, proclaimed by all the leading fundamentalists as the only correct view, belongs to an age that is forever past; it grew naturally out of the conceptions of the Bible, of God, of the universe and of human life that were widely prevalent in a former age but that have become obsolete in the thinking of intelligent men today. In the light of modern Biblical scholarship, modern science and modern religious philosophy, the whole approach to the problem of

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Jesus has been tremendously altered over that of the creed-makers; the factors that enter into the problem are entirely different, the very terms in which the problem is interpreted are changed.

The difference, then, between these liberals and the conservatives in the churches today goes far deeper than mere words; it grows out of a fundamental difference of view-point in the understanding of the universe, in the explanation of human life, in the conception of God and His relation to man, and in the interpretation of both human and divine. Let us seek to indicate briefly the influences that have made inevitable the liberal view of Jesus, as held by Dr. Grant, Dr. Fosdick and many others, and that has made impossible to intelligent minds the conceptions still entertained by the fundamentalists generally.

Modern Biblical scholarship has shown most conclusively that the virgin birth stories had no place in early Christianity, and that they were not used as arguments for the Divinity of Jesus until about the middle of the second century after Christ. Let me indicate briefly the evidence for this conclusion.

Taking the Gospels as they stand, and beginning with Jesus himself, we find that he is no-

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where represented as alluding to any miraculous birth. On the other hand, there are passages which seem to point to his belief in a purely human origin of himself as well as of the other members of his family. The language in which he is quoted as addressing his mother positively precludes the possibility of his having regarded her as differentiated from all other mothers. Nor does Mary make any allusion to the birth of Jesus. Yet the earliest Gospel (Mark) attributes to her, as to others, the words, "He is beside himself,"—words which it would hardly seem she could have said of Jesus had she thought of him as miraculously born.

The Apostle Paul was the earliest of the New Testament writers. He died about thirty-five years after Jesus. His letters were written between the years 50 and 64 A.D., the first of them (Galatians) twenty years before the earliest of the Gospels. While the scholars are still uncertain as to the authorship of many of the epistles ascribed to him, the letter to the Galatians and that to the Romans are generally conceded to be the productions of the Apostle. It is in these, and only these, that Paul makes any mention of Jesus' birth; and in these passages he makes no allusion to a "virgin" birth, but distinctly affirms

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the altogether natural origin of Jesus. "Made of the seed of David, according to the flesh," are the words he uses in his letter to the Romans; and in his letter to the Galatians he states the mode of Jesus' birth in such a way as to indicate that it behooved him to be born in the same way as those who were to be redeemed—"made of a woman, made under the law." If, in presenting his view of Jesus as the Saviour of Mankind, he could have backed up his argument with an account of a supernatural birth, what an incalculable advantage it would have given him! If there already existed in his time such a belief, certainly Paul would have known it, for he was, you remember, the guest of Peter in Jerusalem for the space of a fortnight. During that visit he must have learned everything of vital importance concerning Jesus, and assuredly of a miraculous-birth story had such existed. It would thus seem that prior to the year 64, the year of Paul's death, the belief in a supernatural birth of Jesus was not in circulation.

When we turn to the so-called "triple tradition," which is the story of Jesus' life in which the first three Gospels agree, we find they are not at one regarding the nature of his birth. For while Matthew and Luke contain a virgin-birth

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story, Mark has no birth story whatever. On the other hand, all three contain an account of Jesus' baptism, and all three agree in representing Jesus as *then* receiving "the Holy Spirit." Is it not a safe assumption that if these writers had known of a virgin birth they would have necessarily identified his receiving the Holy Spirit with that miraculous event, and not with his baptism? Hence the scholars are forced to conclude that the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke formed no part of the original text, but were added at a later date.

Mark's Gospel is the next in the order of authorities to be consulted. It is the earliest of the Gospels, and was written about 70 A.D. Here, once more, we find no allusion to a virgin birth. Is it presumable that this earliest biographer of Jesus would have begun his record with the baptism of Jesus and omitted the narrative of a virgin birth, had it been current in his day? Would he have mentioned Jesus as one of four brothers if he believed him to be born in an altogether different way from that in which they came into the world? In Mark's Gospel we read the following version of the familiar proverb: "A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own

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house.” But in Matthew and Luke, where the same proverb is quoted, the phrase *and among his own kin* is significantly omitted, because to have retained it would have been wholly inconsistent with the presence in these Gospels of a virgin birth story. A prophet miraculously born would certainly not be without honor “among his own kin.”

Passing by, for the moment, the testimony of the First and Third Gospels, which come next in chronological order, let us note the testimony of the author of the Fourth Gospel, written probably about the year 120 A.D. Here, again, no reference is made to a virgin birth, but twice in the course of the record Jesus is addressed as “the son of Joseph,” and on neither occasion does he contradict it. John’s Gospel, so called, is not written as an historical account of Jesus’ life, but rather as a philosophical interpretation of that life, in terms of the Philean philosophy of Alexandria. The author of the Fourth Gospel, whoever he may have been, was clearly imbued with the philosophy of the Alexandrian Jew, Philo, and he gets his idea of the *logos* doctrine, or “the Word Incarnate,” which constitutes the prologue to his Gospel, as well as the expressions “the only begotten Son,” “the Eternal Son of

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God," and many others peculiar to his Gospel, direct from Philo's writings. What a tremendous advantage it would have been to the author of the Fourth Gospel if he could have introduced his philosophical interpretation of Jesus with the statement that he had been miraculously born. The fact that the author believes Jesus to have been "the only begotten Son of God," and yet never mentions the story of a miraculous birth, would seem to indicate that such a story was unknown to him.

We come next to a group of early Christian Fathers who flourished toward the close of the first century: Clement of Rome, Polycarp of Smyrna, and Ignatius of Antioch. In vain we search their writings for any allusion to a virgin birth of Jesus. All three of these Fathers discuss the doctrine that Jesus of Nazareth was a manifestation of God,—the doctrine of the Incarnation, but none of the grounds on which they argue in support of this belief concerns the nativity of Jesus. How immensely it would have strengthened their position could they have availed themselves of a belief in his miraculous birth!

It is in the writings of Justin the Martyr, who flourished about the middle of the second century

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after Christ, that we meet *for the first time* a reference to the virgin birth of Jesus. But note what Justin says on the subject. He refers to it as a newly presented doctrine, and when asked if he believed it, replied by pointing to the Romans and the Greeks, who held a corresponding belief about the origin of their heroes, and Justin urged this fact as sufficient ground for a like belief in the supernatural paternity of Jesus. Was it not generally believed that Plato was the son of Apollo and Periktione, that Augustus was born of Jupiter and Attia, that Julius Cæsar was born in the Temple of Apollo, the son of a God? How much more then might this be contended in the case of Jesus the Christ? This, in substance, was the thought of Justin as he worked it out in his "Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew." Thus it appears that down to the year 140 A.D. not a single Christian writer, excepting the authors of Matthew and Luke, makes any reference to a virgin birth of Jesus.

But when we turn to these two sources, we find that in several important particulars they are mutually contradictory and hopelessly irreconcilable. Close and careful study of their discrepancies has led many scholars to the conclusion that the opening chapters of the First and

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Third Gospels formed no part of the original record, but were given a place in it after the middle of the second century. Let us consider simply two facts in this connection.

In the first place, we note that, while both Matthew and Luke present genealogies of Jesus, they are not only contradictory and mutually exclusive, but, what is strangest of all, they both trace the descent of Jesus *through Joseph*, and not through Mary. This would indicate that the authors regarded Jesus as the son of Joseph, and that, therefore, these genealogies were prepared *before* the virgin birth story had come into existence. For if a writer believed that Jesus was born of a virgin, he certainly would have no object in tracing his genealogy through the pedigree of a human father. If the genealogy is correct, then the birth story is incorrect, and *vice versa*.

But again, in the sixteenth verse of the first chapter of Matthew's Gospel we read: "And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called the Christ." But in the so-called "Sinaitic-Syriac" manuscript, discovered on Mount Sinai in 1892 by Mrs. Agnes Lewis, and revealing a Syriac version which is now our earliest witness to the text

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of the Gospels, we find this verse rendered as follows: "Jacob begat Joseph. Joseph, to whom was espoused the Virgin Mary, begat Jesus, who is called Christ." In other words, in this our ultimate appeal, so far as manuscripts are concerned, we have it explicitly stated that Joseph *begat* Jesus (as Jacob begat Joseph), thus testifying to the belief in the human paternity of Jesus.

Thus we have seen that Jesus, Mary his mother, Paul, the triple tradition, the Gospel of Mark, the Fourth Gospel, Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, make no mention of a miraculous birth of Jesus. Only two of the eleven leading informants in the first century and a half of our era report a virgin birth story—the authors of the First and Third Gospels. And in view of the facts mentioned above, the New Testament scholars infer that the chapters containing the birth stories in Matthew and Luke were incorporated in these manuscripts about the middle of the second century. So much for the historical basis of the idea of a miraculous birth upon which all the fundamentalist preachers and writers lay such stress.

Or, if you take Jesus' own consciousness as it is revealed in the synoptic Gospels, there is no

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place left for the doctrine that "Jesus is God." He said, "Why call ye me good? There is none good save one, that is God." Again he said, "The Father is greater than I"; and it was this consciousness that led him to pray, again and again, to his Father in secret. He disclaimed omniscience explicitly, and there is more than one passage recording surprise on his part, impossible to predicate of God. There is nothing he claimed for himself that he did not claim for all men. If he was called "the Son of God," he called men "the children of God." He said, "I am the light of the world," but he also said "Ye are the light of the world." If he performed works of healing, he declared "Greater works than these shall ye do because I go unto my Father." And in that last prayer for his disciples he prayed "That ye all may be one, even as I and my Father are one," that is to say, he believed that all men might achieve the same kind of unity with God and with one another that he felt he had achieved. If "Jesus was God," then, there is no escaping the conclusion that he believed that all men could become God, for he certainly taught that all men might become like him, and live his kind of a life.

But if the modern critical study of the New

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Testament has disproved the historical basis for the literalness of the birth stories, modern science has made it impossible for intelligent minds to accept any such conception as that of a miraculous birth. Suppose Jesus, or anyone of equal moral and spiritual greatness, were to appear today, do you imagine for a moment that an age like ours would attempt to explain the unique greatness of such a life by a miraculous birth? Since the times that saw the rise of these birth stories, science has ushered man into a new and practically infinite universe which man knows to be under the reign of laws throughout, and laws which are not broken at the arbitrary whim or caprice even of God. If it were possible for these fundamental laws of the universe and of life to be broken, even in a single instance, there would be no basis for the stability of the universe, no ground for any science, no possible foundation for truth. It is safe to assume that even the fundamentalists do not credit the miraculous birth stories by means of which the ancients in all lands explained their heroes; why then should they make an exception in the case of Jesus, when we know that these stories about Jesus grew out of the same idealizing tendencies of a pre-scientific age that have produced all such stories?

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The laws that govern human procreation are as sacred, as fixed and as inevitable as are the laws that govern the movements of the heavenly bodies. They cannot be broken or suspended any more than can the laws of physics or chemistry. So wonderful and universal is the fact of sex, and so increasingly pronounced does it become the higher we ascend in the scale of animal life, that we are compelled to regard it as an ordained condition of being. I do not imagine that the authors of the birth stories about Jesus realized that, while their birth stories seemed to do honor to Jesus, at the same time they cast a slur on all parenthood as we know it. Yet, for us in the modern world, there can be no other view. To think a virgin birth "holier" than that which is ordained as a law of being, as a condition of existence, is to malign both fatherhood and motherhood, and to degrade what, as parents, we all know to be the holiest as well as the most mysterious experience of human life. To one who knows what science means and all that the idea of the reign of law involves, it is utterly impossible today to accept these stories literally without doing violence to one's own mental integrity.

But it is modern religious philosophy as well as Biblical scholarship and science that preclude

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thoughtful minds of today from accepting the historicity of these stories. According to the prevailing ideas of the creed-making period of Christianity, the universe was a very limited affair. The earth, upon which man dwelt, was flat and stationary; a short distance above the earth was heaven where God reigned, surrounded by his angels; and hell was a cavelike structure somewhere in the bowels of the earth. God was a kind of magnified individual, localized somewhere in space above the earth. God was essentially different from man. True, in the beginning He made man in His image, but in the sin of Adam the whole race had fallen under the wrath of God, and since then had continued its existence totally depraved and hopelessly corrupt. The only way in which God could reach the earth was to stoop down, as it were, from His heaven above and arbitrarily take some part in human affairs. The only way in which He could get into the lives of human beings who had become thus hopelessly separated from Him was by breaking or suspending the laws of human procreation—laws which presumably He had Himself made,—and thus enter into human life by a “miraculous birth.” This He had done in the birth of Jesus; and henceforth Jesus was

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God in human form, and the only true manifestation of God in the life of men.

It is needless to say that all such conceptions are utterly childish and forever gone from intelligent minds, and yet they form the background out of which came the interpretations of Jesus that seem so vital to the religious conservative of today. We know today that the universe is infinite, that Heaven and Hell are not places in space, but conditions in spirit, that God is not an individual localized somewhere in space, but everywhere present, the thrilling, throbbing, immanent life of the universe, that God and man are not separated, but "closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet," and that, therefore, every birth is a "divine" birth and every babe a "holy" child. Whatever else may be involved in the modern thought of God, it assuredly contains the great idea, which is as old as it is new, of the immanency of God, as the creative life "that rolls through all things," that wells up in every human being as consciousness, and that finds its truest and fullest expression in the spiritual aspiration and the moral endeavor of every soul.

In the ages that gave birth to the historic creeds, the problem of Jesus was primarily a

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theological problem growing out of pre-scientific notions of the universe and of human life. The questions that were then fiercely discussed dealt with "the substance" of the Divine nature, the metaphysical relation of Jesus to God, on the one hand, and to the Holy Spirit on the other, of how Jesus could be truly God and at the same time truly man, of how the two natures could exist in the same being, etc., etc. Today all these metaphysical questions have faded into the background; they have lost all interest and meaning for the modern man. The problem of Jesus in this age is primarily a psychological problem, for the theological Christ has given way at last to the human Jesus whom we never tire of contemplating. The problem of Jesus in the realm of the moral and spiritual life is identical with the problem of Shakespeare in the realm of poetry, or that of Abraham Lincoln in American life. We can no more "explain" one than the other. No ancestry or training can account for such lives. They simply are; and not even our latest psychology can account for their transcendent greatness. As Dr. Grant has well said, "What has the birth of Jesus to do with Christianity?" What difference does it make how or when or where a man is born? It is what he is in himself, what

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he becomes, and what he does that really counts. If Jesus had not been, in character, what he was, would any virgin birth have made him "divine"? How long will bishops and theologians continue to quarrel over how he was born when the only question of importance is whether his character, his spirit and his message have any vital meaning for men today?

As a matter of historic fact, this present theological controversy quite reverses the original interest of the Apostles' Creed. This venerable document of the second century was born in controversy. Its major interest was to assert something which the orthodox in their discussions today seem likely quite to ignore—the perfect humanity of Jesus. In the long discussions on the person of Jesus which came after the formulation of this creed, there were few who could say flatly, "Jesus was God," and these few were counted as heretics. Theirs was the heresy of Apollinarianism. Most of the extremely orthodox at present, even including the Bishop of the New York Diocese, would have been excluded from the church of the fourth century for holding this heresy.

I know there are many in all the churches who say, and quite honestly, "If we give up the theo-

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logical Christ there is nothing left, for then Jesus is nothing but a man." "Only a man," they say, and the very tone in which they utter the words betray the low opinion they have of human nature. "If Jesus was not God," they say, "then he was only human, and his life is shorn of all meaning and his message of all power." But does this necessarily follow? Let us see. What do we mean by the words, "human" and "divine"? Are the terms mutually exclusive? Our newest psychology is revealing mysterious depths of powers and potentialities within human nature of which we have not hitherto dreamed. Is there anyone today who would dare to set limits to the possibilities of human nature, both for good and for evil? Who knows how low it can sink, or how high it can rise? Much as we have learned about ourselves, is not the mystery of human nature still unfathomable?

What do we mean by "the divine"? The creed-makers of the past thought they knew very definitely. To them, "the Divine" defined "the First Cause," or "the Absolute," or "the Infinite"; and this "Divine," by whatever name it was called, consisted of a "substance" that was essentially different in kind from the "substance" that made up human nature. But these meta-

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physical conceptions of the past have no place in the philosophical thinking of our times. The whole tendency today is to construe "the Divine" in moral and spiritual terms rather than in metaphysical terms. Formerly men approached the thought of God through Nature, but now the true approach to God lies through man himself, and especially through that which is highest and most distinctive in man—his moral nature and his spiritual aspiration. We can still talk about God, if we choose, in terms of "First Cause," "the Absolute," or "the Infinite," but we recognize that all this lies in the realm of speculation, not of knowledge. The God that we *know* is the God of the moral life, who is revealed to us in moral ideals, and who finds expression through our moral endeavor. And this God, whatever else He may be, is not something or some One apart from human nature, but He is a very part of human nature, the "Divine" in human nature at its highest and best.

It is not enough, therefore, to say of anyone, "he is only a man." The real question is, "What kind of a man is he?" There are men and men; those who represent the zenith of manhood's possibilities, and those who stand at its nadir. "Only a man,"—but we must take each man at his real

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value. There are men who sink so low as to make us despise our common human nature, and there are other men whose manhood towers up so high as to touch the Divine and make us conscious of God whenever we think of them. It is the heights of moral character which they have reached, it is the spirit that is expressed through them that makes us feel that in such lives we see a revelation of the God of the moral ideal. In man's moral nature we see the "divine spark" that Carlyle declared was in every man; and when we find that nature developed into a strong and beautiful symmetry of manhood or womanhood, we feel ourselves instinctively in the presence of the Divinest we can know.

In one of his novels, Hall Caine describes the gambling hells and drinking dens of London, where so-called men, like harpies, are preying on their kind, luring the youth of both sexes to destruction of body and soul, and doing it for selfish gain. "Only a man," but a man who does that is a devilish man. There was another kind of man. Hugh Price Hughes, who night after night entered these dens of infamy and, by the sheer force of his unselfish personality, drew out of these sinks of iniquity, sometimes a man, sometimes a woman, and gave them back their

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manhood and womanhood and turned their faces again towards sobriety and purity and the life of usefulness. When he died, thousands followed him to his tomb, and when the service was over and the crowd had dispersed, there was one poor woman who asked permission to lay a bunch of violets on his coffin. He was "only a man," but to her he was a man of men, for he had saved her from a fate worse than death.

Or, compare the Earl of Shaftesbury, who devoted his life and his fortune to bettering the lot of the factory workers in England, with those factory owners, who, for the sake of private gain were content that their workers should starve and die in ignorance and filth. When he came to die, the great Earl declared that he could not bear to go out of the world and leave so much suffering and misery behind. "Only a man," but the difference between the Earl of Shaftesbury and those against whose merciless greed he struggled for years, was well-nigh infinite.

Poor indeed, in its sense of moral values and in its spiritual perception, is that age or that individual that can no longer appreciate the greatness of Jesus because he has ceased to be the mythical figure of the theologies of the past. Does anyone really question that if Dr. Grant

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and Dr. Fosdick have indeed abandoned the theological Christ, they have not, in so doing, recovered the real human Jesus. "Only a man," but what kind of a man was Jesus? Let us recall the simple facts.

Gradually, through long centuries of suffering, there had grown up among the Hebrew people the expectation of a Messiah, some one who should be born as a descendant of David, who was to come and rule the world and set them on high among the peoples of the earth. But this kingdom as it was to be held by them was an earthly kingdom. They did not put it afar off in the skies. It was to be here among men. Its capital was to be Jerusalem, which was to them the center of the world. But he did not come.

In the period just preceding the birth of Jesus the air was full of expectation. There were Christs many, for "Christ," as you know, is only the Greek form of the Hebrew "Messiah," and so anticipation was rife, and men were looking for his coming on every hand. Then at length came the gentle Nazarene who did not claim to be the Messiah. He was born of the Jewish race. He was saturated in the history and the religion of his people, and especially in the writings of the great Hebrew prophets. Through

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long years, we are told, he grew and developed naturally and normally in physical stature, in his mental powers and in spiritual perception. And at last he appeared before the people as a teacher.

He did claim to teach a reform in the national religion, not by destroying Moses and the prophets, but by reinterpreting and thus "fulfilling" their earlier teachings. He did claim to speak for the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. He never tired of telling of God's willingness and earnest desire to forgive and fold to His loving heart all His erring, wandering children of the world. He looked deep into his own soul and he dared to believe that he found something of God there. He looked deep into the lives of others and dared to believe that he also found something of the same God in every human life. And so he revered all human beings, and he loved all men and women and little children, for he saw in all the same essential life that he found in himself. Out of his faith in human nature and his love for men grew his wondrous dream of the Kingdom of God on earth, when human brotherhood should become indeed a reality, and justice and love should reign supreme. And as time went on he

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talked more continually of "the new heavens and new earth" that should one day replace the wars and strife, the greed and selfishness, the cruelty and injustice that then filled the world of men. He did not ask men to accept any creed or to join any church, but he did teach that love for God and love for man was the one cure for all the evils of the world, and that only as men learned the supreme lesson of love, and discovered how to translate love into all the relations of daily life, could the Kingdom of God ever be realized upon the earth. This was the life-work of Jesus.

But, as in the case of Abraham Lincoln and all truly great men, his contemporaries did not understand him; even the common people were not ready for him. And when he spoke against making the Temple "a den of thieves," when he touched the self-love and pride of the popular party, when he discredited all the elaborate system of sacrifices, when he said that the poor publican who truly repented of his sin was better than the most punctilious pharisee who kept the letter of the law but knew nothing of its spirit, then he cut across all their cherished prejudices, and they would have none of him. And when they came really to understand that he cared

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nothing for all their extensive ritualistic worship at the Temple, and when they saw that "the common people heard him gladly," and that the crowds that followed him were steadily increasing in numbers and enthusiasm, and that there might be complications with the dominant religious party as well as with the power of Rome, then they cried out, "Away with him; crucify him!" And one day, one of the darkest days of all human history, they took this man, so gentle and yet so strong, so true and so loving, and they led him along the *via Dolorosa* to the little hill beyond the city walls, and there they crucified him between two thieves. This was his life; and his death was the fate shared by all great prophets.

"Only a man," but, *what a man!* Superficial indeed is that shallow criticism which fancies it has revealed the total truth about these birth stories of Jesus when it has stigmatized them as "the worthless product of an age steeped in superstition." Far from discarding them as worthless myths, the thoughtful man will treasure them among the supreme proofs preserved to us of the moral and spiritual greatness of Jesus, and of the reverence and love which that great-

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ness called forth in the hearts of his contemporaries and biographers? Had Jesus been a man of smaller mould, no such birth stories would ever have been written of him. Wonder-tales are never told of commonplace people. It was because Jesus transcended the limits of ordinary, average human nature that there grew up around his personality, naturally, in that pre-scientific age, the significant legends of the Gospels and the "Apocrypha." Thus, these birth stories, while not at all the historical record of his origin, are yet the spontaneous products of the influence exerted by his own great and singularly unique life. They are not histories of fact, but symbols of the quality of his person. They are poetic expressions of the popular faith that, being so unusual a character, Jesus must have been born in an unusual way. They represent that "truth of poetry" which, as Aristotle taught, is more than the truth of history.

When the creed-making centuries came, we can understand today why, in trying to philosophize about the person of Jesus and explain his unique greatness, they employed the theological expressions and phrases that finally found their way into the historic creeds. The language that

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seems to us so strange, and perhaps quite meaningless, was all there, ready made, with which to interpret this great life. The creed-makers turned naturally to the Jewish categories of thought that lay nearest at hand, or to the terms of Greek philosophy, or the teachings of Philo of Alexandria with which they were familiar, and attempted to define this life of Jesus in terms of these familiar categories. What were some of these familiar forms of thought? "The Christ" (or the Messiah), "the Son," "the only begotten Son," "the image of the invisible God," "the first-born of every creature," "the Logos" (or the Word). These and many others were the thought-forms in which the writers of the New Testament clothed the personality of Jesus. They were already there, waiting their use. Judaism was full of them and, still later, Greek philosophy furnished many more. They all represent a sincere attempt to interpret and explain the life and character of Jesus in terms of thought, perfectly familiar to the people of that time, but which man's thinking has long since outgrown.

But, just as in the case of the birth stories, the understanding mind today recognizes in these

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old thought forms of the creeds the symbols of spiritual realities. He does not believe them literally, but he accepts them as poetry that reveals its own truth in its own way. And beneath the form of the story or the statement of the creed he sees the imperishable truth of the moral and spiritual greatness of the life and spirit of Jesus who lived our human life at its highest and best, and whose influence for good in the world is eternal.

The metaphysical arguments about the nature of the Godhead are not nearly so important as liberal controversialists and orthodox theologians have insisted, and they have arisen out of conceptions of God and of man that are no longer held by persons who have had the discipline of a thorough course of philosophy. The really important question of theology is, after all, not what shall we think of Jesus' relation to God, but rather, what meaning do the life and teachings of Jesus possess for us today? If the fundamentalists would only center their attention upon this, instead of upon the virgin birth, there would be more hope for organized religion.

Let us never forget that if Jesus has become to us "only a man," he is, nevertheless, the man of men, in whose universal spirit of love and in

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whose ideals of righteousness lies the world's only hope.

"Was Christ a man like us?

Ah, let us try if we then too, can be such men as he."

VI

HAS JESUS ANY MESSAGE FOR TODAY?



ONE of the distinct achievements of the historical scholarship of the last seventy-five years has been the new light it has thrown on the origins of Christianity. When David Friedrich Strauss first published his *Leben Jesu* in 1835, the Christian world was shocked not so much by the author's conclusions as to the legendary character of much of the material found in the Gospels as by the fact that he dared to apply the canons of historical criticism to the New Testament, and especially, to that part of it dealing with the life of Jesus. It was believed at that time that the Biblical literature was "sacred," and that no one had the right to subject it to the same standards of historical and literary criticism that were applied to other ancient documents.

Once begun, however, the scientific study of both Old and New Testaments has gone steadily on, and from the time of Strauss until today

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there has been a constant stream of books coming from the press in all countries, dealing in a more or less thorough-going scientific spirit with the life and times of Jesus. If this critical historical study of the Gospels has tended to weaken the old dogmas about Jesus, as it most assuredly has for all thoughtful minds, it has certainly made more real and luminous the personality and teachings of Jesus as they stand out against the background of the times in which he lived.

From being the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God by virtue of a Virgin Birth, or the majestic figure now seated at the right hand of God on his throne in the heavens, Jesus has become, thanks to historical criticism, a living, breathing human personality in whom dwelt a spirit so pure, so lofty, so disinterested and universal that all men today are proud to do him reverence. The theological Christ, who was fast becoming a mere phantom to intelligent minds, has become the historical Jesus at whose feet we are still glad to sit as humble learners.

We see him today as he really was,—born of the Jewish race in an age of peculiar turbulence and violence, facing with his own people certain very definite and concrete problems, and later on, adopted by Christianity as its Divine Saviour,—

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and yet towering so far above the provincial exclusiveness of the Jew and the dogmatic and narrow sectarianism of the Christian that we are not content to call him either Jew or Christian, but can think of him only in terms of the universal man whose insight went down to the deeps of human nature and whose sympathies were as broad as all humanity.

Let us admit frankly that Jesus never claimed to have spoken the last word either in morals or religion. "I have many things to tell you but ye cannot bear them now," and again, "When I am gone from you the Spirit of Truth will come, and He will be continually leading you into all the truth." Let us admit also that in some particulars he shared the intellectual limitations of his age and partook of the ignorance of his fellows. We also know that there are many moral problems and innumerable social conditions which confront us today about which he knew nothing, since they did not exist in his time. We can also admit with Mary Austin, in her recent article in *The Century*, that he left no detailed instructions as to the technique or method by which his lofty principles were to be applied to our complex political, social and economic problems of today.

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But in spite of all these admissions, which modern historical scholarship has proven justified, the question that I want to consider now is, whether Jesus, regarded not from the viewpoint of the churches or creeds but simply as an historical character who stands among the foremost of the world's great moral and spiritual teachers, has any real message for us today? In attempting to answer this question, I am not thinking of those many specific teachings which have come down to us from Jesus, some of them original with him and some that had found expression long before him, that we all of us know to be true,—true not because Jesus taught them, but intrinsically and universally true. What I am seeking to do in this connection is to get back of all that is obvious and self-evident in his teachings to that which was fundamental in his message, or to that which constituted the source from which all the other teachings naturally and logically flowed forth.

All the scholars are agreed today that the teachings of Jesus revolved chiefly around one central point,—the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God. From the beginning of his public ministry to its close these words were most frequently on his lips. Whether dealing in ab-

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stract statements, or employing his favorite parable form of illustration, the Kingdom of Heaven was his constant theme. But why did he use this phrase so constantly? What were the influences that made it the central theme of all his teachings? And, especially, what did it mean to him, what content did he put into these words?

While there have been many volumes written in recent years that have dealt with these questions, there is one little book that came from the press last spring that seems to me especially illuminating, and that to my mind throws a flood of new light on the central message of Jesus. It is entitled: "Toward the Understanding of Jesus," and its author is Vladimir G. Simkhovitch, Professor of Economic History in Columbia University. The author's approach to his subject is purely the historical one. He is not interested in how the Greeks or the Romans, the peoples of the Middle Ages or the Anglo-Saxons have at various times conceived or pictured to themselves Jesus and his teachings. This is an interesting problem in itself; it gives us the history of Christianity. But these interpretations are only confusing in our quest for the historical Jesus, and what the author is seeking is that

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definite, concrete, historical Jesus who can give coherence to his teachings.

It is only possible, with the limits of space, to give the briefest summary of the vivid picture drawn by the author of the age in which Jesus lived. In the year 70 A.D. the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed, the city itself was sacked, and the population either slain, crucified or sold into slavery. It is estimated that over a million and two hundred thousand perished. The conventional history usually states that the war between the Jews and the Romans that culminated in the year 70 in the complete destruction of Jerusalem began in the year 66, when the Romans and other Gentiles were massacred by the Jews of Jerusalem. This date is so artificial that Mommsen, the historian, suggests A.D. 44 as the year from which the Jewish-Roman war might better be dated. But our author points out that this earlier date is also artificial, for the revolt of the Jews had long been brewing and had repeatedly broken out here and there long before that time.

If we should follow the opinion of a contemporary historian, Josephus, we should have to date the beginnings back to the revolt of Judas, the Gaulonite, to whose revolutionary activities

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and doctrines Josephus attributes all the ensuing misfortunes of the Jewish nation. The occasion of that uprising was the census of Quirinius for taxation purposes in the year A.D. 6. Josephus tells us that one Judas, the Gaulonite together with a Pharisee named Saddouk, urged the Jews to revolt, both preaching that "this taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery, and exhorting the nation to assert its liberty."

But as our author makes clear, the Jewish struggle for independence and the Zealot movement did not begin even with Judas in 6 A.D. Judas himself only continued the work of his father, Ezechias who, with his very large following, was killed by young Herod in the year 46 B.C. Nor does the rebellion of the Jews begin with Ezechias. The rebellion of the Jews against Rome rather begins with the power of Rome over the Jews; it can easily be traced back for decades prior to the beginning of the Christian era; and in the same degree that the Roman power over the Jews increased did the political reaction against that power, the revolution against Rome, increase and spread.

The out-and-out Jewish revolutionaries were called by the Romans, bandits or robbers; they were known among the Jews as the Zealots. But

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it is clear from Josephus that they were in no sense mercenary bandits, but political and religious devotees who preferred death to submission. It is also clear that the Zealot movement was much older than the revolt of Judas, the Gaulonite. The Pharisees were in sympathy with the spirit of revolt that actuated the Zealots, only for prudential reasons they did not unsheathe the sword or take an open part in the rebellion, whenever it broke out, but they nursed their resentment and bitterness in their hearts.

In the year 6 A.D. Judea was annexed to Syria, and it is interesting to note that the Jews themselves petitioned Rome to grant this annexation. But why? Where, then, was Jewish patriotism, where the exclusive nationalism, clothed in all-consuming religious fervor? The answer of history is simple. The reason they preferred to give up their nominal political independence under the Herod dynasty and accept the rule of the Roman procurator of Syria was because they came to see that the issue was drawn between so-called political independence and their cultural life, especially their religion. As between the two, their religion was the last thing to be surrendered. It was in reality a phase of the nationalistic struggle, although it took the

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curious form of a petition for annexation to Syria. If they should be managed by the Roman procurator of Syria, they still clung to the desperate hope of complete cultural autonomy and the right to manage their own local affairs. Ruled by a Herodian prince, they realized that they were quite helpless to do so; for the Herodians, while nominally Jews, were striving hard to be culturally Romans. Their petition for annexation was, therefore, to be an exchange of their sham political independence for what they hoped would be real cultural autonomy. In other words, complete independence looked to the more enlightened part of the population like a forlorn hope; and the struggle was waged for home rule that would not infringe upon religious traditions.

We can now, perhaps, realize in its main outlines the situation that confronted Jesus. Between the time of the annexation of Judea to Syria in the year 6 and the utter destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in the year 70, Jesus lived his life, delivered his message and was crucified on Golgotha. During the hundred years and more prior to the beginning of the Christian era the Jews had been struggling more and more intensely against the Hellenistic tendencies that

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threatened to destroy their own cultural life and weaken their religion. These tendencies were somewhat checked by the nationalistic and religious revolt of the Maccabeans; but they revived again under the Hasmonean dynasty. And now that the little Jewish Kingdom was becoming more and more a dependency of Rome two tendencies were rapidly developing; that of submission to Rome and cultural assimilation, and that of growing nationalism and religious orthodoxy. Romanization now threatened the very life of their traditions as Hellenization had formerly done. It was taking away their political independence, but still more seriously, it was interfering with their religion.

It is clear that during the entire period that Jesus lived, the life of the little nation was a terrific drama; its patriotic emotions were aroused to the highest pitch, and then still more inflamed by the identification of national politics with a national religion. The situation was not at all unlike that which existed in Ireland during the years following the Great War; it bears a close resemblance to conditions in India today.

Is it reasonable to assume that what was going on before the very eyes of Jesus was a closed book to him, that the agonizing problems of his

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people were matters of indifference to him or that he had given them no serious consideration? Must we not rather conclude, in this age fairly seething with the intensest sort of nationalism inflamed with religion, when the people were thinking constantly of but one problem,—that of their national existence, and when this one problem was the daily theme of conversation, that Jesus in his earlier years of preparation was taking a definite attitude towards the very people that later on he was to teach?

After the annexation to Syria it steadily became clearer that Rome was establishing herself ever more frankly and firmly as Judea's avowed lord, with the natural result that the increased national feeling and the bitter national antagonism of the Jews became equally frank and aggressive. The religion of their forefathers became the unfurled banner of a nation at bay. From now on, whether in passive resistance or in open rebellion, the only lord and master they recognized was the Lord of Hosts, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with whom they believed they had a sacred covenant, and who must speedily send the great Deliverer, whom their prophets had foretold, to save his people in their hour of direst need.

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As time went on, greater and more tragic became the pressure; greater and more imperative became the need. From every heart went forth the cry: Where was the Messiah? Would he come in the future? But there was no longer any future; it was then and there that he must come; the danger was imminent; the hour was now. Yea, if his people were to be saved, he must have come already, must be among them then, only unrecognized as yet,—the promised and long-hoped-for Messiah, the anointed of God, the Christ.

Need we longer ask the question under what influences Jesus developed, or what problems absorbed him before he began his ministry? The central problem of his people was so enveloping, so all-absorbing, that we are forced to take for granted that Jesus' religious and intellectual life revolved around it, and that his own mental and spiritual development consisted in the gradual solution of this very problem.

The idea of a coming Messiah who should save his people had long been familiar to the Jews. A century or so before Jesus Messianic qualities had been attributed to the Maccabean leaders; a century after Jesus the last great rebel leader, Bar-Kochbah, was viewed as the Messiah. So it

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was not strange that when this new teacher appeared, speaking on his own authority, so desperate was the external situation, so desperate the inner pain of earnest souls searching for a way out, that many of the people looked upon him as the promised Messiah, the great Deliverer that should come.

Even a superficial glance at Jesus' life shows us the imminence of the great disaster that culminated in 70, and how concretely Jesus' life was bound up with the political destiny of Judea. For was not Jesus born in the days of the tax-enrollment? Did not the same enrollment start the rebellion of Judas the Gaulonite? And did the battle-cry of Judas, "No Tribute to the Romans," ever die out in Jesus' lifetime? We know that multitudes followed Jesus, and that "the common people heard him gladly." Can we possibly assume that his message was in no wise related to the paramount burning interest of the people? What did he mean when he reiterated that he was sent to save the lost sheep of the House of Israel? What did his followers have in mind when they perceived in him their Saviour, their Messiah? What did the people of that time expect from their Messiah except their national salvation? What that national sal-

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vation meant was clear enough. Luke states it: "That we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us." Read again the Gospels and see how luminous become many hitherto obscure passages in the light of this historical situation which Professor Simkhovitch describes. Many passages which the theologians have classed as eschatological, that is, as having reference to the end of the world, are clearly intended to refer to the impending disaster at the hands of the Romans, the inevitable end of the tragedy toward which, most obviously, the children of Israel were so rapidly tending.

The supreme problem, then, which Jesus was called upon to face, and to solve, was the supreme and desperately pressing problem of his people,—that of preserving their national existence in the presence of their enemies. Jesus, like Josephus and many others, saw the inevitable consequences of the Jewish rebellion. Many intellectuals probably foresaw and feared the outcome, but they felt powerless against the national passion that was burning in the hearts of the mass of the people.

Jesus, like Josephus and others, opposed resistance to Rome, though for very different reasons. Those who favored non-resistance to Rome

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could be divided into two classes. One class welcomed and aspired to the universal Roman civilization. Complete assimilation, Greco-Roman culture was their ideal. Their attitude towards religion was, of course, purely formal. This class was neither numerous nor influential, but it undoubtedly existed. The other type of non-resistant was both numerous and significant. These were men who knew enough about the world at large to see clearly what resistance to Rome implied and foreboded. They knew that resistance was a physical impossibility and only invited complete destruction and ruin. They did not love Rome because they could not fight; they hated her all the more. It was a prudent attitude, but sooner or later it was certain to be swept away by the tide of active resistance.

The solution of the problem which Jesus reached was the result of a unique insight which he gained in an inner struggle with himself, where alone true insight is always gained. I cannot escape the feeling that the story of the temptations of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels are really parables of alternatives, of political and religious choices which he faced in the depths of his own being. One solution can be expressed something like this: Here is the Holy City; here

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is the temple of God; and here are God's chosen people. Can God allow them to perish? Most assuredly not. Hence even the war with the entire world, whose name is Rome, cannot but end with the victory of God and His people. Or, in the words of the Gospels: "Cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee. . . . Jesus said unto him, . . . Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Thus Jesus could not accept the Zealot nationalist solution that trusted the miraculous power of God to save in the face of certain defeat.

There was an alternative in exactly the opposite direction: to let the Roman civilization supersede Judaism. Let the Jews frankly accept Rome and its culture, let them become Romans; then, indeed, the entire world will be theirs. Or in the words of the Gospels: "Again the devil taketh him up into an exceedingly high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world . . . and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then Jesus saith unto him, Get thee hence, Satan." . . . Between these two extreme solutions were other alternatives, chief among them the one that had no higher aspiration than just to live, and to live by bread alone. This could have

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made no appeal to such as Jesus. Jesus had made his own discovery of the only solution he could accept, and this solution constituted the core of his message.

His first words as a public teacher were these: "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." It was his first use of the familiar phrase which was afterwards so often on his lips. He did not coin the phrase, the Kingdom of Heaven. It had long been in use among the Jews; it stood for their idea of a theocratic state; to the people of his own day it meant very definitely national independence and freedom from the hands of their enemies. When Jesus makes the Kingdom of Heaven his constant theme, therefore, he is adopting a phrase that carries a very concrete meaning to his hearers,—the fulfilment of their deepest hopes, their salvation as a separate nation. But for him, as we shall see presently, it had a very different meaning. The word translated "Repent" comes from a Greek word that means "Change your minds" or "change your thinking," a very different conception from that of our theological use of the word.

Thus at the very beginning of his ministry, it was as if Jesus had said: "The Kingdom of Heaven of which you are constantly thinking and

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which you imagine I have come to establish through the overthrow of your enemies and the setting up of an independent theocratic state, is indeed at hand, but it is something so entirely different from what you conceive as to require nothing else than a complete and radical change in your thinking about life, about God, about yourselves and your fellows."

Later on he discloses his secret, he makes clear his insight, he gives them his solution of the supreme problem that absorbs their thought and inflames their passion. In Luke 17:20-21, he says, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation; Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for behold, the Kingdom of God is within you." This is the secret of Jesus,—The Kingdom of Heaven is *in us*. It is not primarily an external thing, it is a thing of the inner life. It is not an independent political state, it has to do with a man's attitude, his disposition, his understanding, his spirit. It does not mean lowering of taxes, or freedom from paying duties on commodities, or release of prisoners, or any of these things for which you are clamoring; it is something that has to do, rather, with ideas and ideals; you are thinking only of things. It means, to be sure, the conquering of your ene-

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mies, but not by force or violence as you are planning. Your real enemy is not outside but within yourself; it consists in the spirit of hatred and bitterness and aggressive self-assertion that fills your lives. Conquer that spirit and you have already won the true victory.

Think of the amazement with which these hot-headed and turbulent people must have listened to his words: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your father which is in heaven; for He maketh his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." And these words, remember, were spoken when the enemy were at the gate, when they had the most direct application in the minds of his hearers to the Romans who were threatening their little nation with destruction.

Turn to the Beatitudes that begin with blessings upon the humble. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." "Blessed are they that mourn (naturally one mourns the loss of one's national independence);

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for they shall be comforted." "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth," etc. Meekness, humility, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, purity of heart, are all spiritual terms; and to inherit the earth means but a spiritual inheritance. And then in the passage immediately following: "Ye are the salt of the earth." These words clearly are not addressed to the world at large, for then there would have been no earth left, only salt.

It was as if he had said: "You believe that you are the chosen people, but for what were you chosen? Chosen to carry to the world a great moral and spiritual message. If you have no spiritual message for the world, what are you good for? In resorting to force and violence, you are but meeting your enemies on their own ground, you are employing their weapons, you are fighting fire with fire. And in the end you will surely be destroyed. If you could but realize it, you have at your disposal weapons of which your enemy knows nothing. In meeting force with the things of the spirit, you will be invincible. You are burning with national humiliation, but the only balm for that humiliation is humility of spirit; for humility is the one thing that can never be humiliated. You are aggressively seek-

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ing your own, but through the spirit of meekness you can even now enter into possession of your own, which can never be taken from you. You are clamoring for revenge, but revenge is a two-edged sword which inevitably slays him who employs it, and only by the spirit of forgiveness can you ever make your enemy your friend. Your souls are filled with hatred and bitterness against your oppressors, but I say unto you, Love your enemies, for your hatred is hurting you far more than it can injure them."

It was at this very point that the great cleavage took place between Jesus and the leaders of the people. The priests and the Pharisees could probably have overlooked the heresies in the religious teachings of Jesus, but they could not accept his teachings of non-resistance to Rome. For this reason the time came inevitably when Jesus was delivered over to his enemies and the rebel leader Barabbas was released. The 100 per cent patriots had won the day. They knew not what they were doing, nor did they realize that they were sealing the fate of their nation. To Jesus, however, it was quite clear, and that is why, when the women of Jerusalem followed him on the way to Golgotha, bewailing and lamenting him, he turned to them and said: "Weep not for

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me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

This is the secret of Jesus, this is the heart of his message, this reveals his insight that led to his unique solution of the problems that absorbed the people of his day. It was not the solution of the Zealots, nor of the Pharisees, nor of Josephus. Historically considered, the problem was very local. Even from a religious point of view it was a provincial problem; and yet Jesus' solution became the most universal achievement in the annals of all time.

The Kingdom of Heaven is within us. Simple as the words are, they are freighted with an eternal meaning. All the deepest thought of Jesus about God is focused in these words. He never seeks to define God or explain him in philosophical terms. To him, God is not seated on some lofty throne in the heavens. He is not outside but ever and always within the soul of every human being,—the highest we know, the deepest we feel, the best towards which we aspire, ever speaking to us through the voice of conscience, ever calling us to higher and better things. In these same words is focused also Jesus' deepest thought of man. If the divine dwells in every human being, then every individ-

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ual is inviolable, the human personality is sacred just because he is a moral being, with all the possibilities of moral growth and unfolding. And the great duty of life is to seek the enhancement and enrichment of personality, whoever it may be or wherever it may be found.

The Kingdom of Heaven, then, is not something foisted upon men from without; it grows up within man himself. It consists in the inner attitude and disposition and spirit of one's life. I fully agree with those who believe that the Kingdom of Heaven, as Jesus used the words, contained his dream of a more perfect society that should one day exist upon this earth. But I cannot escape the conviction that in his thought this more perfect society could only be realized in the world at large, as it first came to have its place in the inner lives of men, as they changed their thinking about God and life, about themselves and others, and as this changed thinking led to such a complete and drastic change in their attitudes and understanding of moral and spiritual things that Jesus could liken it to nothing else than a literal re-birth of the spirit.

If I am right in this interpretation of the central message of Jesus, has it any application to our life today? It seems scarcely necessary to

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enlarge on the answer in this connection. Everywhere in the world today we find the fires of intense nationalism burning. The supreme virtue today is 100 per cent patriotism,—a patriotism, alas, that too often means that I can love my country only by hating or belittling all other countries. The great nations are consumed by lust of power, dominated by greed and actuated by aggressive selfishness, and the smaller nations are all too prone to follow the example set them by the great. Everywhere fear, hatred, bitterness and prejudice are poisoning the lives of men and nations. The imperialistic powers are clinging desperately to the territories they have governed in the past, and reaching forth more or less openly for fresh territories to exploit, while the weaker peoples of the earth are wondering in fear and trepidation when their turn will come to be mastered by strong and greedy powers. The situation presented today is closely akin to that which Jesus confronted in his own day, only now we see it on a world-wide scale. Then it was Jews and Romans; now it involves all of us.

Those in every land who are earnestly working for a better world are laying the emphasis on the need of a League of Nations or on a World

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Court or on some plan to outlaw war or on some new organization or third party. All this is good and needed, but these things are only new machinery after all, and in and of themselves will never redeem the world from its present woes. Herbert Adams Gibbons says, in his last book, "Europe Since 1918": "The League of Nations is impotent, with or without the United States as a member, to restore Europe to peace, until the three Furies—Vanity, Greed and Revenge—cease raging."

Deeper than all other needs is the need of a new and different spirit in the lives of men and nations. In spite of all the centuries that intervene, we need to rediscover the central truth of Jesus, that truth that had nothing to do with churches or rituals or creeds, but that stands forth today, thanks to historical scholarship, as the universal and eternal truth for mankind. We need to hear once again the challenge of his great words: Change your thinking, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. The old world of politics, of social and economic institutions, of morals and religion, is fast passing away. The ideas upon which that old world was builded have become obsolete. They are no longer adequate to the new

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world that is coming into existence. We must begin to think differently about human relations.

If Jesus were alive today would he not say to us, as in effect he said to the people of his own time: You must dare to think differently about everything. If you are honestly seeking a better world, in which war and strife are to be banished and more of justice and brotherliness shall come to have their place in human life, do not forget that this better world must begin in your own lives first of all, and then work out through you into all the manifold relations of life. It is for you to conquer all fear, to banish all hatred, to rise above all prejudice, to dispel all bitterness in your own hearts before you are fitted to help in the bringing in of the better world to men. If you would have all wars cease, then learn to love your enemies and to forgive those who hate you. Would you help in the removing of the deep-lying causes of war and strife, then see to it, by a rigid self-discipline, that you have removed from your own life every slightest tendency to injustice to even the smallest and weakest. Would you work for the coming of human brotherhood, then live the life of brotherliness, and live it habitually and universally, shutting out no one from your sympathy and love.

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The people of his own day did not understand Jesus' message; they were not ready for it; they could not accept it. Those who followed him in spirit then, constituted only the "pitiable minority." It is not different today. There are millions of professed followers of Jesus, but how few who as yet have grasped his insight, how few who accept his way of life, how limited the number who believe in his Kingdom of Heaven! To-day, as then, his followers are only "the pitiable minority." Perhaps it will always be so. But however limited the number may be, it is those who have found the Kingdom of Heaven within themselves, who have come to see it in all men, and who are seeking to translate the truths of that Kingdom into the more just and righteous society, that constitute the "salt of the earth" and "the light of the world."


The Kingdom of Heaven, the better world of which we dream, and for which we yearn, must begin within ourselves. This Kingdom primarily is a matter of attitude, of understanding, of insight and of spirit. But the Kingdom is also like a mustard seed, which is the tiniest of seeds, but which grows in time "so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

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And just so, after all, is human assimilation of all knowledge and all insight and all understanding. It means the re-education of the mind. It involves the re-birth of the spirit. It is a matter of slow growth.

VII

IS THERE A PLACE FOR FAITH IN MODERN LIFE?

N a recent address before representatives of the Missionary Societies of the various denominations of the country, President Coolidge, in the course of his remarks, emphasized "the revival of religious faith" as the supreme need of today. It raises at once the whole question of what we mean by "faith;" and what kind of faith, if any, is "needed" at this particular time?

In this age of conflicting ideals, of religious scepticism and of wide-spread confusion of thought, this message of the President must have called forth inevitably very different responses from the people who read it. There is first of all the response of the fundamentalists in religion who have hailed this message with joy and who immediately proceed to interpret "the faith needed today" in terms of their own literalistic understanding of the doctrines of the creeds of their respective churches. "This," they say, "is

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exactly what we have been preaching all along. The world is going to destruction through lack of faith, and unless faith can be 'revived' there is no hope for the future." And it is clearly evident that to the fundamentalists, "faith" means a very definite and specific thing. To them faith is *belief* in certain intellectual propositions that have come down to us from the far-away past in the form of religious dogmas; and to believe these dogmas means the intellectual acceptance of them just as they stand in the old creeds. This is the kind of faith needed today, as understood and as demanded by every fundamentalist pulpit throughout the country—the faith that is belief in the literal truth of old dogmas.

Then there is the response of that large number in our age who have frankly abandoned all forms of "faith" for what they call "science." The President's message finds all such quite indifferent, or even awakens in the minds of many a feeling of open hostility. This class of people boasts of having attained the "modern" viewpoint. They remind us that we are living in a scientific age, that slowly but surely the steady advance of science during the last three hundred years has proved unmistakably that these old beliefs of men are based not on facts but on credul-

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ity; that, one by one, intelligent minds have been forced to abandon these earlier beliefs about the universe, about man and about religion, for the truth as revealed by science. They claim that to seek the "revival of faith" is nothing less than to seek the revival of ignorance and superstition, since all faith in the past has grown out of man's ignorance and has led inevitably to superstition. And so they confidently proclaim their belief that the world has at last emerged from the "dark ages" of faith into the clear knowledge of science. Henceforth man is to live by sight and not by faith. It is not a revival of faith that is needed, but its decent burial, with all the other outgrown and obsolete things upon which man has depended in the past.

But there is still a third response called forth from some minds by the President's message, differing both from the fundamentalist and the so-called "modern." These people are modern, too, in the sense that they gladly accept all the clear findings of science about the universe, man and life, and yet they recognize that science has not spoken the last word about many things, and in spite of all the new light of science, man still finds himself confronting mysteries which not even science has yet explained. They see most

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clearly that while science has indeed explained many things, this does not mean that it has explained the facts *away*. What science does is to give us clearer and truer explanations, but the underlying facts themselves still remain as facts. For example, scientific physics has analyzed heat and explained it by reducing it to molecules. We accept the explanation, but we still know there is such a thing as heat, and we continue to use heat to warm our houses and prepare our food, in spite of the scientific explanation. In the same way science has explained the rise and development of religions, but it has not explained away religion; the fact of religion still remains a fact. So science has explained, through biology and psychology, the intricate mechanism of both the physical and psychical life of man, but it has not *explained away* man himself,—man as we know him, with all his hopes and fears, his doubts and faiths, has yet to be reckoned with. The conception that when science explains anything it means that the thing itself has of necessity been explained away, is a view that no true scientist would admit, though many of the modern votaries of science fail to see this important distinction.

To quote from William James: "There is included in human nature an ingrained naturalism

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and materialism of mind which can only admit facts that are actually tangible. Of this sort of mind the entity called 'Science' is the idol. Fondness for the word 'scientist' is one of the notes by which you may know its votaries; and its short way of killing any opinion that it disbelieves in is to call it 'unscientific.' It must be granted that there is no slight excuse for this. Science has made such glorious leaps in the last three hundred years and extended our knowledge of Nature so enormously, both in general and in detail; men of science, moreover, have as a class displayed such admirable virtues that it is no wonder if the worshippers of science lose their heads. In this very university (Harvard) I have heard more than one teacher say that all the fundamental conceptions of truth have already been found by Science, and that the future has only the details of the picture to fill in. But the slightest reflection on the real conditions will suffice to show how barbaric such notions are. They show such a lack of scientific imagination that it is hard to see how anyone who is advancing actively any part of science can make a mistake so crude. Think how many absolutely new scientific conceptions have arisen in our own generation, how many new problems have been formu-

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lated that were never thought of before, and then cast an eye upon the brevity of science's career. It began with Galileo three hundred years ago. Four thinkers since Galileo, each informing his successor of what discoveries his own lifetime had seen achieved, might have passed the torch of science into our hands as we sit here in this room. . . . Is it credible that such a mushroom knowledge, such a growth overnight as this, can represent more than the minutest glimpse of what the Universe will really prove to be when adequately understood? No! Our science is a drop, our ignorance a sea. Whatever else be certain, this at least is certain: That the world of our present natural knowledge is enveloped in a larger world of *some* sort, of whose residual properties we at present can frame no positive idea."

These words are as true today as when William James first wrote them, and it is no disparagement of science, least of all of the scientific method for ascertaining knowledge, to admit that all our knowledge is a relative thing and that the more we come to know, the more conscious we become of the ultimate mystery that surrounds us on every side. This last class of "moderns" realize this fact, and, while it gladly

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gives science all credit for the knowledge it has disclosed and for the still greater knowledge it will yet discover, it is not quite so certain as some that we now live by sight and not by faith, or that faith in some form can be altogether dispensed with in modern life. It knows that underlying mathematics and all the natural sciences are fundamental axioms and postulates which are "caprices" and which are selected, for practical purposes, out of an infinity of "possible worlds." A certain kind of "faith," therefore, lies at the basis of all science and is the incentive of all scientific investigation.

In its response to the President's message as to the need of faith, this last group of moderns are inclined to believe that the faith needed to-day is in no sense a "faith" that is contradictory to the findings of science, neither is it a faith that is swallowed up and lost in science, but rather a new and nobler type of faith that co-operates with and uses science for the achievement of its great ideals. Let me attempt to set forth the nature of this "faith" demanded by our modern age.

In the familiar definition of faith that occurs in the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews we are told that "Faith is the substance of things

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hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The two parts of this definition are usually supposed to be supplementary, but, as a matter of fact, they present two radically different conceptions of faith; and the attempt to unify them leads to all the vagaries and confusions in which popular thought on this subject abounds. Each of these different conceptions has played an important part in religious traditions as well as in recent controversy. Faith may be *either* "the substance of things hoped for," or it may be "the evidence of things not seen," and, as we shall show, it makes a very real difference which these view-points we adopt. Let us consider the second conception first.

"Faith is the evidence of things not seen." If faith be regarded as a type of *evidence*, then it inevitably comes to serve as the basis for beliefs. Faith as evidence, therefore, is something to be formulated in doctrines and creeds, just as scientific evidence is translated into laws and formulas. Sometimes the ultimate faith is placed in an Institution, as in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, which is supposed to have the authority to formulate faith in particular beliefs, which the people must accept. Sometimes the ultimate faith is placed in the Bible,

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as in the case of Protestantism, where each sect formulates its beliefs based upon its own particular interpretation of the Bible. But in each case faith is regarded as evidence, furnished in one instance by the Church, in the other by the Bible, to be formulated into beliefs that give conviction, assurance or certainty. It is this conception of faith that underlies all creedal religions,—a faith that furnishes evidence of things that are to be believed. A man's faith, then, comes to consist in the things he believes; that is, in certain intellectual propositions that have been formulated. This has been the popular and traditional conception of faith.

It is only a question of time, however, when these formulations of beliefs come to possess, for those who hold them, the value of *knowledge*,—different it may be, but of a "higher" quality than the knowledge gained from other sources. These doctrines appear now to the believer to contain "inspired" or "revealed" truth which should take precedence over all other knowledge. This view gave rise to the dictum of the Church Fathers, *credo quia absurdum*, "I believe because it is absurd"; the more impossible a belief was to reason, the greater the faith. Thus "faith" tended to lose its original character and

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became a "higher knowledge," which could, and should, be opposed to all other knowledge.

It is upon this conception of faith as a "higher knowledge" that fundamentalism opposes modernism. Biblical scholarship has made clear the origin of the various writings that compose our Bible. It tells of the life and personality of each of the different authors. It describes the age in which he lived and the people for whom he wrote. It points out the discrepancies, the inconsistencies, the contradictory statements and the mistakes that clearly have their place in the Bible. And it comes to the conclusion that, whatever its greatness may consist in, we do not possess in the Bible an infallible book. But to this scientific conclusion about the Bible the fundamentalist opposes his faith in the infallibility of the Bible, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary that scholarship can adduce, on the ground that his faith-belief contains a higher knowledge than that of the scholars.

In the same way science has retold for us the story of creation in accordance with the doctrine of evolution, and told it so clearly and convincingly, with such a wealth of evidence to support its claim, that it seems incredible that all who read should not understand and accept. And

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yet Mr. Bryan, Dr. Straton; et al., persistently take their stand against all the findings of science and oppose to the bitter end the claims of evolution on the ground of their "faith," which consists in their belief in the literal historicity of the early stories of Genesis. Their "faith," presumably, gives them a "higher knowledge" about the creation than any knowledge of science.

Similarly, historical criticism has taken the Gospel narratives of the New Testament and discovered that the two widely different stories of the birth of Jesus did not have a place in the original narratives, that they are a later addition, that in both Matthew and Luke they explicitly contradict the statements in the genealogical tables that precede them, that they express in poetic form the current belief in a virgin birth as the only way to account for an exceptional character, and that, in their literal form, they violate all the laws of procreation as we know them, besides casting a slur on human motherhood. But the fundamentalist still stoutly maintains his "faith" in the historicity of the Virgin Birth stories, which he regards not strictly as faith but as knowledge,—a "higher knowledge" than that of historical and literary criticism.

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The results of this conception of faith as evidence, giving a kind of "higher" knowledge which can and must be opposed to all other knowledge of every sort,—the conception of faith as synonymous with certain definite beliefs which can never be changed, that has played so large and determining a part in religion in the past, must be clearly self-evident.

In the first place, this kind of faith always divides and never unites men. If my faith is a formulated creed, then all who believe my creed can join with me, and all who do not must go elsewhere. Every creed is always divisive and separative, and inevitably draws lines between men who should belong together. The tragic religious divisions that fill the world are but the outcome of faith regarded as synonymous with certain beliefs, whereas the faith demanded to-day is one that shall be able to unify men and bind them together in loving fellowship.

But again, the conception of faith as evidence always tends to the divorce between faith and reason; it leads man to force himself to "believe" what his reason tells him is not true, and this in the name of religion. It means the destruction of the integrity of man's intellectual and moral life, and the separation within himself of

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what should never be divided. It makes inevitable such tragic controversies within organized religion as we are witnessing today,—controversies which have nothing whatever to do with real religion in the moral and spiritual sense. And lastly, this conception of faith as evidence or belief, tends to the divorce of religion from character, so that one ends by enshrining his faith in a creed which he repeats in church on Sunday, instead of embodying it in his life, to be lived forth every day of the week in all his relations with his fellows.

Every man who thinks at all and who attempts to formulate what he really believes will have his own personal *credo*, however simple or brief, and he will keep what he believes open to revision constantly, as the new light comes through the widening of experience. But this is a very different thing from the use that has been made of creeds in the past and is never to be confounded with a "living faith." And this leads us to the consideration of the second part of the definition of faith.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for." The contrast is clearly obvious. The doctrine of an Infallible Bible may be, to some minds, a legitimate object of "belief," but it is scarcely

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a thing "to be hoped for." The doctrine based on the stories of creation in Genesis may be an object of belief, but it is hardly the kind of thing we hope for. We may believe in the Virgin Birth, but it does not belong to the things we hope for. And so with the Trinity, and all the other doctrines of theology. When faith is viewed under the category of hope rather than under that of evidence or belief, its subject-matter shifts from the ground of assurance in the existence or reality of a thing to our willingness to look forward to it as an object of our deepest interest or endeavor.

In this second conception of faith we pass from the world of postulates to that of possibilities, from foundations to goals, from beliefs to ends in view, from convictions to aspirations. Postulates, foundations, beliefs, convictions may be necessary and valuable,—I believe they are,—but they are never to be confused with a living faith that, by its very nature, belongs in a world of possibilities, of goals, of ends in view, of aspirations. Faith consists of the willingness to pursue untiringly the things for which we hope. It is the power by which we seek daily to translate possibilities into realities.

In so far as religion is a life of faith, then

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religion is more like a search for something that is missing,—something that has been glimpsed but not yet attained,—both in my own life and in the life of society, than it is like a system of beliefs about something already found in the past. If the word “God” be taken as the symbol of the objects of faith, we may put this in more traditional language by saying that religion is concerned not so much with the problem of finding evidence for the existence of God, as with the problem of seeking a God who now appears to hide His face. Countless lives have “found God” all down through the past and have translated what they found into the Bibles of the race. To accept what they have written of their own experiences in their search for God is to believe that these souls in the past found God, which is a very different thing from finding him for ourselves. Every age must find its own God, for the gods of the past will never suffice for the needs of the present. Every individual must search for God until he finds Him, and it is faith that sends one out on that search in the clear knowledge that the search of no other single soul in all the range of history can ever take the place of one’s own personal search for that God who is truth and goodness and beauty.

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Faith is not evidence for the existence of the unseen, but willingness to search for that which we hope some day to see. To change slightly those great words of Lessing: If God were to offer me in one hand, faith as evidence of the unseen, and in the other, faith as the search for what I hope to see, I would take faith as the search for what I hope, for in that search lies the greatest zest of life, through that search I gain the discipline of life, and by means of that search I become worthy of that for which I hope.

William James has developed this last conception of faith more fully than any other recent philosopher, though not always consistently. In his familiar address entitled, "Is Life Worth Living?" he has been discussing faith in an unseen moral order, and he asks the question, "but will our faith in the unseen world verify itself? Who knows? Once more it is a case of *maybe*. And once more *maybes* are the essence of the situation. I confess that I do not see why the very existence of an invisible world *may* not in part depend on the personal response which anyone of us may make to the religious appeal. God Himself, in short, may draw vital strength and increase of very being from our fidelity. For my own part, I do not know what the sweat

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and blood and tragedy of this life mean, if they mean anything short of this. If this life be not a real fight, in which something is eternally gained for the universe by success, it is no better than a game of private theatricals from which one may withdraw at will. But it *feels* like a real fight; as if there were something really wild in the universe which we, with all our idealities and faithfulnesses, are needed to redeem. And first of all to redeem our own hearts from atheisms and fears. For such a half-wild, half-saved universe our nature is adapted. The deepest thing in our nature is this dumb region of the heart in which we dwell alone with our willingnesses and unwillingnesses, our faiths and fears. As through the cracks and crannies of subterranean caverns the earth's bosom exudes its waters, which then form the fountain-heads of springs, so in these crepuscular depths of personality the sources of all our outer deeds and decisions take their rise. Here is our deepest organ of communication with the nature of things; and compared with these concrete movements of our soul all abstract statements and scientific arguments, the veto, for example, which the strict positivist pronounces upon our faith, sound to us like mere chatterings of teeth. For

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here possibilities, not finished facts, are the realities with which we have to deal; and to quote William Salter, 'as the essence of courage is to stake one's life on a possibility, so the essence of faith is to believe that the possibility exists.' These, then, are my last words to you: "Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living and your faith will help create the fact."

Let me seek to make this distinction between the faith that is mere belief, and the faith that earnestly seeks the objects of its hope, a little clearer by a few illustrations. Suppose, when the reparation question was uppermost, you had approached a European statesman with the question: "Do you believe that there exists a solution to the reparation problem?" He might have replied: "I hope so." But if you had persisted he might have grown impatient and said: "Don't disturb me with such foolish questions. I am too busy trying to *find* a solution to argue with you whether or not one *exists*." Or suppose he had consented to argue with you about the existence of a solution to his problem, as the theologians have been arguing about the existence of God for all these centuries, what would have been the result? Neither you nor he, presumably, would have

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known the solution, and any arguments you might have mustered for or against its existence would probably have been highly speculative. Certainly by devoting time and energy to this argument you would have been hindering rather than helping the actual discovery of a solution, if there is one. If one has faith in a problem, one works at it; if not, one works at other problems which seem more promising.

What do we mean by faith in humanity? Do we not mean our feeling that in every man and woman the whole world round there is the possibility of the development of the moral and spiritual life? We do not *know* that it exists in all men; in countless lives, from our viewpoint, we see no evidence of its existence; our experience with human nature as it is, more often than not, seems to point directly against any such view. But we do see the development that has taken place in the direction of moral character in some lives, past and present, and we hope that the capacity for similar development, now latent and unrecognized, may lie in all men. We may be wrong in this view; it may eventually turn out that humanity as a whole is utterly incapable of ever conquering the brute and learning to control the savage that

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dwells in human nature. But we dare to pin our faith to the possibility, and in that faith we give our efforts to the realization of our hope that one day the possibility may be realized.

What do we mean by faith in social justice? Certainly we do not mean that we believe that social justice now exists. We know that it has no existence throughout the world save in our dreams. The masses of men and women in every land are either suffering dumbly from countless forms of injustice and oppression, or else are struggling more or less vaguely for the simple justice that is denied them. The injustices under which the millions live and toil in our industrial civilization appear to many to be eternally rooted in the very nature of things. Changes can be made, to be sure, and reforms are indeed brought about from time to time, but injustices, in old or new forms, seem to persist in spite of all reforming efforts. And yet our faith, based not on evidence that is now seen, but on our hopes of what one day may appear, leads us to work and sacrifice daily for the coming of more of justice into the collective life of man. We may be deceiving ourselves by these hopes; it may eventually turn out that this world is one in which injustices must always have their

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place; we do not *know*. But in just the measure that we do possess the living faith in justice do we go forth to work unceasingly for the realization of our hopes that some day social justice will be achieved.

What do we mean by faith in democracy? Certainly not ~~that~~ that we believe that democracy now exists except as an ideal. As a matter of fact, the progress that the world seemed to be making towards democracy has in these last few years received a serious check. Emperors and kings have indeed gone into the discard as one result of the war, but the old autocracy has reappeared in various new forms of dictatorship, and government of the people, for the people and by the people seems just now further from realization than during the last one hundred years. Even the belief in democracy as an ideal has suffered eclipse in many thoughtful minds. And yet, in spite of the non-existence of democracy today and of all the conditions that seem to be working against it,—even because of these conditions,—we dare to place our faith in democracy chiefly because we hope that by our persistent efforts it may yet come to exist. The very fact that democracy is something we are working towards, not something that is actu-

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ally given, makes it the object of faith, rather than of knowledge.

What do we mean by faith in World-Peace? Everywhere the pacifist is scorned and looked upon as a weakling. The rulers of nations still pin their faith to armies and navies, to aircraft and poison bombs, to force and violence. War has not succeeded in destroying war, but only in inflaming the spirit of militarism and violence. The causes that breed wars have been multiplied a hundredfold. To the grim realist our hopes of world-peace seem woven of the thin and tenuous texture of which mere dreams are made; it *may be* he is right. It may turn out to be true that in this world war will always exist, that men and nations will never learn the better way; they may never learn how to control their belligerency and live the life of co-operation and peace. And yet, in spite of all these forbidding facts that exist, we dare to espouse the faith in the possibility of peace even in a world like this, simply because we can never abandon the hope that by our untiring efforts war can at length be driven forever out of the life of humanity.

What do we mean by faith in life as a whole? We mean the recognition that life, fundamen-

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tally, is problematic and adventurous; it does not stretch out before us all clear and plain; it is full of uncertainties; it involves for all of us the taking of chances. Even to the mature mind life presents itself as a "big, blooming, buzzing confusion," for we are all caught up in movements of whose outcomes we are ignorant; we find ourselves groping more or less vaguely in an alien world. One may, if he chooses, take these facts as final, and regard life as consisting only of this strange medley of order and chaos, of unity and diversity, of harmony and strife, of ignorance and knowledge, which we discover it to be. One may regard life as a farce in which we human beings who are inclined to take ourselves so seriously are only playing silly or meaningless rôles, or one may look upon it as a tragedy in which we are constantly battling against fate. There is no refuting such philosophies. But, on the other hand, one may feel, in spite of all the medley that life involves, that life does "mean intensely and mean good." Life may challenge our intellect as well as our imagination and we may come to regard life as radically adventurous. We may think of ourselves as embarked upon a voyage of discovery. We may analyze the possibilities of life and choose

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between them. We may entertain hopes and act upon them. We may make demands on life; we may live by faith in what we hope to achieve. It may *possibly* turn out that life is only a silly farce or the supreme tragedy,—who really knows? Who can be certain in advance? It is just because life is so problematic and adventurous that it demands faith of us; and “religious faith” is no different in essence from the faith we give to life. But let us remember that such faith, precisely because it is faith and not knowledge, because it makes demands on life and is radically adventurous, guarantees nothing. It dares to take a risk; it dedicates itself to the search for something which *may* possibly never be found.

What do we mean by faith in God? In ancient India men believed that God was the One becoming differentiated in the many. In the theistic religions the idea of God has been individualized; God is a masculine, monarchical being, the ruler of the universe. In early Judaism God is a heavenly King; in Christianity, a heavenly Father; in Mohammedanism, a heavenly Sultan. In “An Ethical Philosophy of Life,” Felix Adler sets God forth as a “multiple God, a democratic, spiritual commonwealth, an in-

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finite organism of spirits; each human being in his or her essential selfhood is an infinitesimal part of the infinite God." God is not man, the individual, raised to the degree of infinity, but human society in all its relations, idealized, glorified, raised to the degree of infinity.

Now we can *believe* in any one of these conceptions of God we choose, or in no one of them, but this belief *about* God is a vastly different thing from a living faith *in* God. If we take the familiar word, God, as the symbol of the ideal of perfection,—whatever else it may mean to us,—then our faith in God may mean our faith in the possibility of realizing, ever more fully, this great ideal in our own lives and in the lives of our fellows. Our faith involves the hope that the divine capacities are resident in all men, and also the hope that by our faithful efforts we can help to bring the divine to realization in all men and in the life of society. Faith in God is not the belief that God exists, nor is it the knowledge that theology has professed as to what God is, what are His various attributes, what are His plans, or how He executes them. Faith in God is the hope that all we mean by the ideal of perfection that the word, God, symbolizes, may some day come to exist in human-

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ity's life,—the hope that sends us forth each day to work for that great end.

But if faith, as we are defining it, is the power that leads us to make adventures and take risks amid all the possibilities and uncertainties of life, we must never forget that faith, taken by itself, is blind. It is a moving power, not a light. Faith regarded as evidence or belief, gives to faith an independent intellectual function that it does not possess, and this leads to the common notion that our "faith," because we can formulate it into beliefs, gives us knowledge. For example, it is a popular idea that by faith we know God. But by faith alone we know nothing. By faith we are engaged in a search,—the search for truth, for goodness, for God,—but only by *intelligence* can we ever find them. Our search begins in darkness; our faith moves amid uncertainties, it takes risks; we must feel our way among shadows. But intelligence discovers pointers from time to time, it discloses facts, it brings insights, which make the search of faith not wholly blind. Let me repeat, however, faith has no light of its own. Faith is the impelling force that urges us on to the search for the things for which we hope. But this

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faith must have the illumination of intelligence to bring it to its goal.

This faith that is the "substance of things hoped for" is thus far more truly religious than the faith that is "the evidence of things not seen,"—the belief that something is true or real; for the first kind of faith sends us out *to find* the truth and *achieve* our ideals, while the second tends to lull the soul to sleep in the thought that these great ends have already been found. It is this faith that impels to ceaseless search that has animated all true prophets and reformers down through the ages, never the mere belief in some creed. It is this kind of faith that has led the great souls in every generation to break step with the crowd and blaze new paths for the progress of humanity. It is a fact of human nature as well as of history that countless lives can live and die by the help of this kind of faith that exists without a single dogma or definition. It is this dynamic faith that alone can save the world.

Is there a place for such a faith in this modern age? The faith that is evidence formulated into beliefs and embodied in creeds, while it may still seem important to many of the older generation, is hopelessly gone from the life of the

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new generation. The young men and women of today do not understand what you mean when you talk in the language of theology; it leaves them cold and utterly indifferent; they live in a different world,—the world that science has disclosed. But if we mean by faith the effort, the striving, the search for the things we hope for, then *this kind of faith* is indeed the pre-eminent characteristic of the new generation. In a broader but vastly truer sense it is far more religious than the older faith of mere beliefs and creeds, and in this dynamic faith, as it works together with intelligence, lies all the hope for the future.

It is told of a traveler in the Alps that, coming on the merest suggestion of a trail at night-fall, he concluded he had lost his way. Seeing a boy in the distance, he cried out to him: "Where is Kandersteg?" "I don't know," replied the lad, "but there's the road to it," pointing to the ticklish trail. In the boy's answer we have the whole practical philosophy of life. It is not necessary to see our destination if only we are on the right road. Facing the uncertainties and possibilities of life there are only three alternatives open to us. First, we can sit down if our inertia be in excess of our initiative.

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Second, we can turn back if our desire to reminisce be stronger than our prophetic instinct. Third, we can go on, in spite of the ticklish trail. By our faith in the capacity for improvement that lies in every one of us, and in the hopes we cherish for the future, *let us go on* in our search for those goals which the best and highest in us *demand*, even though they seem hidden now from our eyes, for this is the faith that "overcometh the world."

VIII

RELIGION AND FREE INVESTIGATION: MUST THEY REMAIN HOSTILE?



IN a recent Conference on "Education and the Public Schools," held in New York City, men like John Dewey, James Harvey Robinson, Harry F. Ward, Henry Neumann, Harry Overstreet and others made statements in clearest and most emphatic terms that should awaken gravest concern in the minds of all truly intelligent Americans. Let us attempt to summarize the facts set forth by these distinguished scholars and experts in the educational field:

1. That the whole business of education, from the University down to the Grammar School, is passing through the greatest crisis it has ever known in this country, and that unless it can come through this crisis with "clean hands," with its integrity and its ideals unimpaired, the future of education in the United States is dark indeed.

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2. That in our larger cities, at least, the control of educational policies is in the hands of those who not only have never glimpsed a better tomorrow, but who do not even know that there has been any yesterday.

3. That a hundred forces are at work, in subtle and indirect ways, to repress the spirit of free investigation both on the part of the teacher and of the pupil, thus making of the school and college mere flunkies of the Powers-that-be.

4. That if present conditions are allowed to continue, the personnel of the teaching profession will steadily continue to deteriorate; the strong, competent teachers, possessed of personality, initiative and imagination, will continue to abandon the profession in still larger numbers for positions where they can employ all their powers and at the same time retain their self-respect, thus leaving the high calling of the teacher in the hands of those least qualified to train the rising generation for the duties and responsibilities of this new and critical age.

5. That the great tragedy consists not in what such conditions do to the teacher,—that is bad enough,—but in what they do to the boys and girls who must be the leaders of tomorrow. We of the older generation are under solemn obli-

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gation to see to it that the coming generation has every opportunity to secure the right training for its great tasks, and so long as present conditions continue we are failing in our supreme obligation.

6. That the responsibility for such shameful conditions lies at the door of an utterly indifferent and apathetic public,—a public that is far more interested in deciding in what form of amusement it shall spend its leisure hours than it is in securing for the children and youth of today the kind of education to which it is entitled, and which alone can fit it to bring in the new and better day for humanity.

There is enough material for a dozen books in these disquieting and alarming conclusions as to general conditions in the educational field. It is, after all, only another phase of the same general problem, for it is the conflict between organized religion, on the one hand, and the spirit of free investigation, on the other, that is fundamentally involved.

The spirit of free investigation is the very essence of true scholarship. It alone has made possible every advance in knowledge, every step in true progress, every change for the better in the organized life of man. Whatever we

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really *know*, either in the field of the physical sciences or of the social sciences, is due to this spirit as it has found expression in the great minds of the past; and the chief reason that the world is not further along today is found in the fact that in every age there have been the stubborn obstructionists in both state and church, who have done their utmost to limit, or even to destroy, the spirit of free investigation.

It is to be wondered how many really appreciate the bitter struggle this spirit has had to make, all down through history, just to maintain its existence and conserve its rights. Socrates, perhaps, deserves to stand as the Father of Free Inquiry. He used to wander through the market-place or out to the wrestling fields of Athens, and wherever he found listeners he would ask questions, calculated to stimulate free thinking. There was nothing too sacred or deep-seated in the minds of his age that he did not dare to question, as he did his utmost to get men to think for themselves. But this spirit of free investigation that found such full expression in him brought him into conflict with Powers that ruled both state and religion, and Socrates, great man though he was, was compelled to drink the fatal hemlock on the charge that he was subvert-

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ing the minds of the youth of Athens, that he was destroying the old gods and inventing new gods of his own.

During the Middle Ages the power of organized religion was so great and so widely extended that it tended toward the almost complete suppression of the spirit of free inquiry. Anyone who dared to differ with the ruling conceptions of the church was a heretic, and all heretics were summarily dealt with. But with the coming of the Renaissance period, the spirit of free investigation burst forth afresh, and the printing press tremendously helped in spreading abroad the new ideas. Copernicus brooded over his heliocentric theory,—that the sun and planets do not revolve about the earth, but that the earth and planets revolve around the sun,—for more than thirty years. As early as 1500 he had announced his doctrine at Rome, but more in the way of a scientific curiosity or paradox. But the longer he studied the more convinced he became that it was *the truth* that would mean the complete overthrow of the prevailing Ptolemaic conception of the universe. At last he prepared his great book on the “Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies,” and dedicated it to the Pope himself. The newly printed book was put into

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his hands when he was on his deathbed. And a few hours later he was beyond the reach of the conscientious men who would have blackened his reputation and perhaps destroyed his life.

About this same time there appeared that other warrior on behalf of free investigation, the strange mortal, Giordano Bruno. He was hunted from land to land, until at last he turned on his pursuers with fearful invectives. For this he was entrapped at Venice, imprisoned for six years in the dungeons of the Inquisition at Rome, and then burned alive and his ashes scattered to the winds. But still the new truth lived on.

The spirit of free investigation found a new champion in Galileo, and when in 1611 the rude telescope which he had invented showed the phases of Venus, the theory of Copernicus was proven true. Then began the long and bitter conflict between Galileo and the authorities of the church that lasted until his death. Earnest preachers attacked him with perverted texts of Scripture; theologians, inquisitors, congregations of cardinals and at last two popes dealt with him and, as was supposed, silenced his impious doctrine forever. The world knows now that Galileo was subjected to indignities, to im-

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prisonment and exile, and to threats equivalent to torture. And at last, an old man, broken in body and disappointed in mind, worn out with labors and cares, dragged from Florence to Rome with the threat of the Pope himself that if he delayed he should be "brought in chains," Galileo was forced to pronounce publicly and on his knees his recantation. To complete his dishonor, he was obliged to swear that he would denounce to the Inquisition any other man of science whom he should discover to be supporting the "heresy of the motion of the earth."

With the recantation of Galileo, theology had triumphed, for the time being, over the clear truth of science. The losses to the world during this complete victory of the church can never be estimated. Let one illustration suffice. There was then living in Europe one of the greatest thinkers ever given to mankind,—Rene Descartes. Mistaken though many of his reasonings were, they bore a rich possibility of fruit. He had already done a vast work. The scientific warriors had stirred new life in him and he was working over and summing up in his mighty mind all the researches of his time. His purpose was to combine all knowledge and thought into

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a "Treatise on the World," and in view of this he gave eleven years to the study of anatomy alone. But the tragic fate of Galileo robbed him of all hope and courage; the battle of truth seemed lost; he questioned whether mankind was worthy of the truth; and so he gave up his great plan forever.

In 1859 when Charles Darwin gave to the world his theory of evolution, the result of his free investigation through a period of many years, the old conflict burst forth anew. The fierce battle that was waged through the sixties and seventies is too recent to need description. It was the dignitaries of the church including many officials of the state, who waged war upon the scientists once again. To every fresh attack, Darwin modestly replied, "If they can disprove my facts, I shall be glad to have them do so." And now once more this old age-long conflict seems to be renewed in our day, with Mr. Bryan and many of the church leaders as the chief protagonists.

It is interesting to note in this connection, as one of the speakers at the Conference reminded the audience, that sixteen years ago Professor Sumner of Yale University made the significant statement: "We are on the way back to an

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orthodox political science, an orthodox economics, an orthodox sociology," and we can add today, "to an orthodox religion as well." This prediction was made by this distinguished scholar several years before the coming of the war, and it would seem to suggest that the reactionary influences from which we suffer today are not altogether the result of the war, to which we are prone to ascribe all our present evils, but that they go back to deeper-lying causes in modern civilization of which the war itself was only a natural result.

Andrew D. White in his notable book, "A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology," sums up the age-long conflict in this way. He tells us it passes through three stages. First, science would announce some new discovery which the church would immediately proceed to condemn as heresy; and if possible it would excommunicate or destroy the discoverer of the new truth. In the second stage the church seeks to reconcile its teachings with the new science and begins to explain its earlier condemnation. In the third stage, when the new truth has become thoroughly incorporated with the old, the church claims that this is what it has always believed and taught. It is in this way, slowly

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and painfully, that the traditional theological notions have one by one given way before the advance of human knowledge and the widening of human experience.

The question that presents itself to all thoughtful minds and that I want to attempt to answer is, why should this hostility exist between organized religion and free investigation? Why should the church set itself so rigidly against the coming of any new knowledge from any source? Why should religion seem timid and fearful and hesitant and oftentimes aggressively antagonistic, while science is daring and adventurous and confident in the presence of new truth? The answer is not quite so simple as many suppose, and involves the sympathetic consideration of several factors that enter into the problem.

In the first place, organized religion, like organized politics or organized anything else, inevitably tends towards conservatism; and the more completely or perfectly it is organized the more conservative it becomes. It was a good deal easier for the one Roman Catholic Church, that became so great and powerful during the Middle Ages, practically to suppress all free inquiry than it has been since the Reformation

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when Christianity has been broken up into many different sects. Institutionalism of any kind is always at the expense of life, which means growth and change. Institutions tend to become static while free investigation is always dynamic; in the nature of things, just because they are of the past, institutions stand for the *status quo*, whereas free investigation is forever exploring new fields. Institutionalism looks backwards while free investigation looks forwards. In just the degree, therefore, that religion, or anything else, becomes institutionalized, it tends to assume the conservative or even antagonistic attitude towards new knowledge or change of any kind. And this is true of the organization as a whole, even while many of the individuals within the organization may be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of free inquiry. This is why every reformation or breaking up of the older institutions of religion is always a good thing for religion itself, since it destroys the old static conditions that have bound religion, and sets it free to become once more the dynamic force it ought to be in the life of man.

Since we desire to be perfectly fair to organized religion, we must also remember that this

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seeming hostility towards new knowledge proceeds from the sincere desire, on the part of many religious leaders at least, to preserve the moral and spiritual values that have come down to us from the past and which they feel are seriously endangered by the new knowledge. Such leaders have regarded the church as the guardian for humanity of priceless and unreckonable treasures which must be defended at all costs. It was precisely this feeling on the part of many,—that the new conception would mean the spiritual impoverishment, the moral deterioration of the life of man, the loss of faith and hope and love and all that ennobled the soul,—that has stirred up all the religious panics which, later on, have seemed to us so uncalled for and absurd. I do not question but that many of the religious reactionaries of today are influenced by such honest motives—the desire to preserve the moral and spiritual values of life against what they deem the hostile attacks of science. And we cannot but sympathize with such motives even though we deplore the methods employed.

At the time of the Jewish captivity, the one preoccupation of religion was, “What is to become of Jehovah?” For his cult was up to then,

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in the minds of both priests and prophets, inseparably connected with Jerusalem and the Holy Land. He was a local divinity. But it was the crushing blow of the exile, which seemed to threaten the destruction of both State and religion that in the end gave to Judaism, and then to the world, the vastly nobler conception of monotheism.

John Keble, one of the finest fruits of Oxford culture and possessed of a wonderfully keen and beautiful intellect, took his stand on the certainty of the Almighty having created all the fossils in the six days of creation. Can we imagine that such a mind would have held to a view which appears now so trivial and impossible, simply for its own sake? It was for the sake of what lay behind. He honestly felt that the priceless values of human life were at stake, and that the new knowledge threatened to wipe them out. Keble and the men of his time, like the Jews in captivity, felt that the very foundations of religion were in question; while as it has turned out, it was only their very imperfect and inadequate notions that were destroyed by the coming of the larger truth.

But still another cause for this old spirit of hostility lies in the mental confusion that still

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exists as to the permanent and transient elements in religion. What is the permanent in religion? It does not lie in any book or creed or church, but, rather, in the moral and spiritual nature of man himself. All Bibles, all creeds, all churches have come forth from what lies within man. Religion does not depend on any particular interpretation of the universe, neither does it depend on any particular interpretation of the experience of man's inner life. It is these interpretations that man has made of the universe and of his own experience that constitute the transitory elements of religion, since these interpretations must of necessity change with the widening of man's experience and the coming of new knowledge. Mr. Bryan would have us believe that religion depends on the literal historicity of the first chapter of Genesis, whereas Genesis was written and all that the Bible contains came into existence, as well as all the other Bibles of the race, because of something in man that we have agreed to call his moral and spiritual nature. Differences in sect or in creed or in ritual are all the perfectly natural results of the transitory interpretations which men of different ages and different environments and different degrees of culture have

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put upon their experiences; but the source of their experience is always the same in every age and clime; it lies in man's own inner nature. If men could only come to grasp this distinction between the permanent in religion which lies within man himself, and the transitory in religion which is the particular interpretation which any age or individual makes of human experience, we should go a long ways towards that unity in religion which is now only a dim and distant ideal.

If our confidence is grounded in the permanent in religion,—man's moral and spiritual nature,—we need not be disturbed by any of the new knowledge that free investigation has made possible to man. Let science interpret the universe according to all the facts, let it tell me all it can about my animal forbears, let it disclose all its knowledge of the biological man that I surely am, let it explain all the chemical and mechanical processes that go on within my body, let the behaviorist in psychology explain the processes of my thinking and acting by similar mechanical processes,—still, when all is said and done, I *know* that I am something more than an animal, that there is something in me that biology does not explain, that there is that

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which eludes the behaviorist's psychology. I *know* that I think and feel and aspire. I know that I have the capacity to create the ideal and the will to follow the ideal. I know that I can glimpse the vision of my "City of God" wherein these moral and spiritual values of life hold the supreme and commanding place.

It makes little difference to me who my progenitors were,—that is a question for science not for Genesis to settle—so long as I know that I am not satisfied with myself as I am, and am not content with the world as it is. I am perfectly willing to accept the fascinating story which tells me that electrons combined into atoms and atoms into molecules and molecules into cells and cells by the millions into this marvelously complex and intricate body I call my own, so long as I realize that there is a higher than the mere body within me. I welcome indeed all the light that psychology has thrown, and has yet to throw, upon the mysterious realms of my inner life, so long as I can dream my dreams and visualize my ideals and thus create my heaven here upon earth. Until there comes a "new knowledge" that wipes out man's moral nature, that makes it impossible for him to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad,

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high and low, that destroys his ability to create the ideal and his capacity to aspire towards that ideal, that blinds his eyes forever to the beautiful, the good and the true—until that day comes, the true citadel of religion in the inner life of man is impregnable.

Because of the failure always to make this distinction between the permanent and the transient in religion, both religion and science have fallen into grave errors. Religion, in seeking to uphold the permanent moral and spiritual values of life has made the serious mistake of upholding just as strenuously the transitory interpretations of human experience, which only constitute the external envelope for the preservation of the inner reality from age to age. And since it has been the traditional theology that was being constantly undermined by the increasing light of new knowledge, the church has ended by emphasizing the transitory theology to the extent of, many times, forgetting the permanent elements in religion.

Ask the average person on the streets of New York to describe for you the different churches you pass. The answer will invariably be in terms of some sect, Catholic or Protestant or Jewish, Episcopal or Methodist, Baptist or Presbyterian,

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etc. If you question more closely, the answers will be in terms of some particular beliefs,—liberal or orthodox, this creed or some other. How often would you be told that this church stood for the moral and spiritual values of life supremely, both in the individual and in the community? And, yet, this is just what all the churches of whatsoever name profess to stand for, since this is of the very essence of religion. For some strange reason the world that passes by thinks of our churches in terms of our sectarian names or of our differing creeds or of our forms of baptism,—the transitory things of religion,—rather than in terms of that which is alone permanent in religion,—man's moral and spiritual life.

But if religion has fallen into this grave error, science has also made a similar mistake. For science, in attacking the theologies and outgrown mythologies of the churches, as it had the right to do in the light of its new knowledge, has too often made the mistake of thinking that the old theology was all there was to religion; it, too, has confused many times the permanent with the transitory in religion, with the result that it has often tended to ignore, or be indifferent to, or even to belittle the moral and spirit-

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ual values of life. There has been grave fault on both sides in this age-long conflict. If religion has been far too fearful of the coming of new knowledge and the changes it might necessitate in its interpretations of experience, science has been so engrossed in its new knowledge and in its effect upon the transitory elements of religion as often to forget that the real source of religion in man's own inner life was still the same, needing only the new and deeper interpretation from age to age.

Let me illustrate the way in which the spirit of free investigation has come short of its possibilities in our own day. For more than fifty years now we have boasted of our modern educational methods. Throughout Europe, as well as in this country, old universities have been strengthened and many new colleges and universities have sprung up. Millions of money have been put into these institutions of learning, elaborate equipments have been provided and splendid faculties of teachers developed. The old classical education has been revived and enlarged and the new scientific education has grown apace. With what result? Out of the older classical education came the men who occupied pretty generally the official political po-

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sitions in the various countries of Europe; and it was these "educated men," remember, who deliberately, by the methods of old-time diplomacy, led the world into all the horrors of the Great War. While the men who came up out of the newer scientific education, with notable exceptions, prostituted that science to the purposes of death and destruction. Is it not clear that if the spirit of free investigation that has found such wide expression in the field of material facts and physical forces in our modern educational systems, had only included in its inquiries the moral and social and spiritual values of life, the world would certainly not be where it is today?

The fact is that there are two very different types of religion in the world, and there always have been. These two types are finely illustrated in the lives and teachings of two of the early Church Fathers,—Tertullian and Origen. Tertullian held that religious faith had nothing whatever to do with reason, that faith was essentially irrational. The greater the contradiction between faith and reason, the more he gloried in his faith. Tertullian would have gladly agreed with the modern theological student who once defined faith as "that power by

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which one was able to believe what he knew was not true." To him faith was something "once for all delivered to the saints," to be preserved unchanged from age to age. New knowledge might come and be multiplied, but it did not necessitate the changing of one jot or one tittle of his beliefs. His faith was a static and final thing to be preserved *in toto* against the coming of all conceivable new knowledge.

To Origen, however, faith was a very different sort of thing. It was not a set of beliefs once for all delivered to the saints, and by them to be preserved unchanged. It was an attitude of the entire man toward truth. It was open-mindedness. It involved the recognition that new knowledge was always coming, must always come, into the experience of man, and that this new knowledge was in no sense incompatible with faith. He believed that faith was a constantly growing and expanding thing, that all new truth only meant new and wider and deeper faith. For he saw faith not as something that contradicted reason, but rather as something that supplemented reason, peering beyond, as it were, into realms that reason had not or could not enter. For these reasons faith, to Origen, was never a static thing but tremendously dy-

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namic,—the great dynamic and energizing power of life. The minute it became static it ceased to be a living faith, and a man's religion was dead. To Tertullian, faith, was ever looking backwards; to Origen, faith was ever looking forwards and moving forwards in its assimilation of the new knowledge that was always coming to man. Tertullian's mind was closed to free investigation. Origen's mind was ever open to the fullest and freest investigation possible.

If it seems to us as if the majority of people today are the lineal descendants of Tertullian rather than of Origen, we need to remember that the liberal churches of whatsoever name, even though they seem to be hopelessly in the minority, are nevertheless keeping alive in the world the noble conception of Origen, that a living faith must always be a growing and changing faith. To all such, religion is never hostile to free investigation but welcomes the new truth from whatever source it may come.

But if there are two types of religion, as we have defined them, so there are two kinds of science, or more accurately, two types of scientists. There is the narrow, dogmatic specialist, who is so absorbed in the single channel he is exploring that he rarely if ever lifts his

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head to get a broader view of things. He lacks the philosophical mind. He knows all about analysis but nothing about synthesis. He seldom asks as to the relation of the facts he is dealing with to the larger ranges of life and experience. He does not seek to coördinate his discoveries with knowledge in other fields. And, often, he is inclined to generalize as to all of life from the facts that lie in his own narrow and restricted field, which is always a dangerous thing to do. It is this type of man who tends to ignore or even belittle the moral and social and spiritual values of life. It is possible for such a scientist to be as narrowly ignorant, outside of his special field, as it is for the most orthodox theologian to be ignorant of science.

Then there is the broadly intelligent scientist, who may do his work in some special field but who is not content to be limited to that one field. He is the scientist plus the philosopher. He seeks to relate his scientific facts to the rest of life. He seeks the meaning of his discoveries for man in general. He does not allow the physical facts or forces with which he works to blind his eyes to the moral and spiritual values of life. He recognizes frankly that there are limits to science, beyond which it cannot go, that

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when science has said its last word, there is still a place for faith and hope and love. Like Frederick Soddy, the leading chemical expert in England today, who refused to prostitute his scientific knowledge to destructive ends at the request of his Government, he believes that the pursuit of science is for the sake of enriching and ennobling the whole man, both individual and collective. These are the truly great scientists to whom the world owes an inestimable debt it can never pay.

It is quite obvious that for the Origen type of religious man and the truly broad-minded scientist there is no conflict between religion and the spirit of free investigation; the spirit of hostility, if it ever existed, has long since given way to one of harmonious coöperation. Where the conflict still exists is between the Tertullian man of faith and the narrow-minded specialist. And it should be our constant endeavor to convert the followers of Tertullian to a broader conception of the meaning of religion, and the narrow and dogmatic specialist to a clearer recognition of the moral and spiritual values of life.

This much is clear, the spirit of free investigation can never be destroyed in man, for it is

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of the very essence of his manhood. Not to inquire freely is to be something less than a man. The right to inquire freely has cost too much, in all the past, to be lightly surrendered now, Mr. Bryan to the contrary notwithstanding. It is not less of this spirit we need but vastly more. Organized religion is in the sorry plight it is today, chiefly because it has feared to admit frankly to its special problems this spirit of free inquiry. And it is safe to say that its problems will never be solved until it does dare to investigate, far more freely than it has ever done, the real source of religion in man's inner life.

In the past, religion has feared the spirit of free investigation chiefly because it felt it might destroy the moral meaning and spiritual significance of human life. But that fear has largely gone today, and a different fear has taken its place. Its fear of free investigation today,—let us say it frankly,—is lest the rising tide of the moral and spiritual life in man should demand changes in the existing social and political order that might not be acceptable to a large proportion of its membership. The most dangerous heresy in the pulpit today is not the theological but the sociological heresy. The move-

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ment in the churches today toward the older traditional theology is not so much the result of intellectual conviction as it is the fear that a more liberal theology may pave the way for more liberal social ideas, and the leaders are determined to resist these at any cost.

It is at just this point that we face the real moral bankruptcy of organized religion. The moral conscience of mankind is awakening, slowly but surely. The social consciousness in man is gradually being developed. Everywhere earnest men and women are reaching out eagerly for a new and different kind of a world. And all this is of the very essence of religion,—of the permanent in religion if not of its transitory elements,—this is the real religion, the moral and social and spiritual life in man beginning to express itself in countless ways of promise. But in the presence of this real religion, the leaders for the most part, both clergy and laymen, are utterly blind to its meaning, and are seeking to drag the churches back to a “safe and sane” theology, to a narrow and competing sectarianism, magnifying, at the expense of the permanent in religion, what is after all only its transitory fringe.

If science would extend its free investigation

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so as to include man in its universe,—the whole man, moral and spiritual as well as biological and psychical,—and if religion would dare to revise its theologies in the light of the new knowledge that has come, while it freely investigates the permanent source of religion in the inner life of man, might it not be possible for science and religion to join heart and hand in the supreme task of making real God's kingdom here upon earth?

IX

WILL EDUCATION SUPPLANT RELIGION?



AMID the myriad confusions that becloud human thinking in this dawning of the twentieth century there is no one that is more dense in all its manifold ramifications, more stubborn to enlightenment, and at the same time more obstructive to human advance and progress than the widespread confusion that surrounds the whole subject of the relation of education to religion.

On every hand one hears, either frankly expressed, or vaguely suggested, the note of distrust of modern methods of education from religiously inclined people. These sincerely perturbed critics of education, many of whom are themselves the products of our educational institutions, feel more or less vaguely that there is "something lacking" in the training that boys and girls receive in our schools and colleges, and that this "lack" has to do vitally with the morals and religion of the boy and girl; that while

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the head may be informed and trained those deeper elements that have to do with character building are being left undeveloped. These people feel, rightly or wrongly, that education ought to lead on to the clear unfolding of the moral and religious life of youth, in preparation for their mature manhood and womanhood, and this supreme thing, they feel the schools are neglecting, or at least, that they are doing it in a very far from adequate way. They look with horror upon the Leopold-Loeb case in Chicago as only an extreme example of "the tragic results of our present-day secularized education."

Any suggestions made to supply this seeming "lack" in our public schools are always met by the reminder that this country believes in the separation of Church and State, and that therefore no attempts can be made to furnish religious instruction to the pupils of our public schools, the assumption always being that religious instruction must of necessity be sectarian and theological. To meet this difficulty, a few years ago a movement was organized throughout the country by religious leaders in the Protestant churches that had as its objective the furnishing of definite moral and religious instruction to boys and girls one afternoon every week in the churches

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of the different denominations. In a small and much less adequate way, this meant following the example of the Roman Catholic Church in the work of its parochial schools, since the instruction furnished, being left to the discretion of each individual pastor, naturally followed the denominational and creedal lines of each church. So far as I have been able to learn, however, this plan to supply "the lack" in our public schools has never met with any great success, owing chiefly to the inability of the Protestant churches to command the attendance of even their own children at these week-day church schools.

The rise of organized fundamentalism in the churches has brought to the surface feelings of distrust and suspicion, that have long been smouldering, against our institutions of higher learning, and we are witnessing today an aggressive attack by fundamentalists of all denominations upon the colleges and universities, and even on the theological seminaries, on the ground that they are teaching ideas that are utterly subversive of religion, that modern science as it is taught is destroying faith in the Bible and in the articles of the various creeds, that many of the foremost teachers in college and university are, at heart, "skeptics," if not open "unbelievers," and that as

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a result, our youth graduate from these higher institutions of learning, having lost all interest in the church of their fathers and, in many instances, having lost all faith in religion. This is indeed a serious situation for religion if this last statement is true. I am not thinking now of the kind of attacks that Mr. Bryan has been making against all teachers of evolution, or of the ignorant and wholesale denunciation by Dr. Straton of "the atheists" who hold chairs in Christian colleges and theological seminaries. I have in mind the many sincere fathers and mothers, who have often sent their children to college at great sacrifice and, while they may never express it to others, who nevertheless cherish a sadness and often a bitter disappointment at what they deem the "skepticism" or "irreligion" imbibed in college by their sons or daughters.

All these critics of modern education, from the view-point of morals and religion as they understand them, have the feeling that education, especially in its higher phases, is distinctly dangerous, if not decidedly hostile to religion, and they are inclined to explain the "lax morality" of young people today on the ground that they have lost their religion through the influences of their education. And so they reach the conclusion that

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there is no harmonious relation between what we call education and what we mean by religion,—that it really comes down to a question of choosing between two exclusive alternatives,—if one chooses education, he must of necessity give up religion, and vice versa.

On the other side stand the scientists and philosophers and scholars generally, who are devoting themselves disinterestedly to the great cause of modern education. And it is not strange, as they listen to these critics of education from the view-point of religion, that many of them, with their scientific knowledge of the universe, of history and of human life, lose all interest in the churches with their narrow sectarianism and their obsolete theologies, while they still believe in and practice a religion of their own; neither is it to be wondered at that among these are some who lose all interest in religion itself, which they identify with creedal and ecclesiastical forms of religion, and regard themselves frankly as being “irreligious.” To many of these representatives of education there exists the feeling, implied if not expressed, that education and religion have little in common today, and each must naturally go its separate path. They make no attempt to discuss religion either directly or indirectly, for they say

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that this leads at once to controversy and trouble, and they have no desire to become involved in theological and denominational quibbles.

When these educational leaders realize how obsolete is the view-point of the fundamentalists and how the most ardent modernist is often guilty of serious compromise with truth, when they see how many of the churches are completely out of vital touch with the moral and social thought of today, and how lacking is all their work in any truly scientific approach to the modern problems of life, when they realize how utterly foreign to the highest aspirations of the age is the spirit of sectarianism that dominates the churches,—a spirit that means the negation of democracy, and that must forever shut the churches off from having any real part in the realization of a nobler, truer democracy than now exists,—we should not be surprised that the feeling is so wide-spread that organized religion has had its day, that the churches are slowly but surely disintegrating, and that more and more education is to supplant religion as we have known it in the past. Are we justified in taking this increasingly gaining view? Shall we turn our backs upon the cause of religion as outgrown, and henceforth devote our energies to “the greater cause” of education?

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Must we, like so many others, make the choice between education and religion, as we realize that these two can no longer dwell harmoniously together? These are in no sense academic questions; they search the very roots of our life today; they suggest the basic sources of the confusion that characterizes the minds of modern men and women.

In attempting to answer such probing questions, let me first emphasize the fact that no one can gainsay, that in the last generation or more *a gradual separation of education and religion has unquestionably been taking place*, that this has led to what amounts practically to a divorce between the two, and that in far too many instances it is a hostile, not a friendly divorce, with unjust accusations and more or less bad feeling on both sides.

According to the mediaeval view the school was a handmaid of the church and the church conceived her mission as that of saving men's souls from eternal perdition. A religion broad enough to include everything that is worthy of being a part of our temporal life, and a religious education equally broad, were in no sense characteristic of the period. The mediaeval view of religion was exclusive rather than inclusive; it

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contrasted the goods of religion with the goods of this world, the blessings of eternal salvation with the fleeting things of time; and as a result it could not utilize in education the whole of man's accumulated experience, but only a part of it. The educator was the priest,—not the man within the priest,—but the priest as representing the goal of life abstracted from the content of life.

This tendency persisted down to comparatively recent times. As everyone knows, the American college originated as an institution of religion, and largely for the purpose of preparing young men for the Christian ministry. Its president was some ordained minister, chosen usually for his standing in the church rather than for his scholarly or even his administrative ability. Its teaching force was largely made up of ex-ministers who found the classroom more congenial than the pulpit. Its curriculum contained Hebrew and New Testament Greek and doctrinal studies, with especial emphasis laid on the "Evidences of Christianity."

But great and momentous changes have taken place in the curriculum, the teaching force, the students, and in the spirit and aim of the early American college; and in addition, we have today the great state universities that have come

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into being entirely apart from religious traditions and independent of all the churches. The students have multiplied by leaps and bounds and have become heterogeneous; they are no longer a chosen religious set. The teaching force has changed in the same direction, because more and more stress is placed upon specialized attainments, and less upon denominational or even religious standing. Very few professors are now chosen from the ministerial ranks, except in the smaller denominational colleges. Meantime the range of instruction has been immensely narrowed with respect to religious subjects; all of these, with the possible exception of elective courses in the Bible, and occasionally in a few of the larger universities, courses in comparative religion, have been turned over to the theological seminaries. Instruction in all but the most pronounced denominational colleges have been almost completely freed from dogmatic limitations. Until the fundamentalists began their recent attack, the professor of history or of geology or of almost any other subject, unless it be social economics, was scarcely conscious of a need of conforming his teaching to a standard that exists outside the facts of the subject itself. Another notable change lies in the fact that all religious

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activities in these institutions have come to be managed chiefly by the students themselves. And finally, the college has come vastly closer to all so-called secular occupations. It is in much closer touch today with law and medicine and journalism and all forms of scientific and social research, and even with business, than it is with the ministry.

It is perfectly conceivable, however, that these changes might have taken place in our schools and colleges without at the same time creating the cleavage that now unquestionably exists between education and religion. Instead of the criticism and hostility that we now witness, these two might be working hand in hand in closest sympathy and coöperation. How have they become so alienated? What has dug the gulf and brought about this evident lack of sympathy between them? The answer to these questions takes us back to the source of so many of the momentous changes in modern times,—the influence of modern science.

Gradually, since the days of Francis Bacon, of Descartes, of Galileo, those great fathers of modern science, the scientific method has been extended to one field of inquiry after another, until by slow yet sure degrees, and in no sense evenly,

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science has at last captured the whole field of education. Here in America, for example, as the result of the development of the last fifty years especially, our schools and colleges have become increasingly scientific, or in other words, our institutions of education are today dominated by the scientific view-point, the scientific method and the scientific spirit in all departments of instruction. But what do we mean by this?

By "scientific method," we mean a characteristic mode of approach to the study of any field of human experience. This method of approach consists of two definite steps: (1) the observing and testing of a body of facts, and (2) the systematizing of those facts, by the discovery or creation of appropriate conceptions and hypotheses, into general truths. The "scientific spirit" is the patient, disinterested, painstaking spirit of willingness to search for the facts, all the facts and nothing but the facts, and to postpone the drawing of any final conclusion until all the facts are known. And the "scientific view-point" is that which frankly recognizes that all our real knowledge,—that is, all that we really know in contrast to what we imagine or believe, or think we know,—in every field of human inquiry, must

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be based in the last analysis on *the facts* which have been carefully tested and verified.

Education can be said to be a science in just the degree that it becomes dominated by this scientific view-point, method and spirit. And I think it can be said without exaggeration that here in our country, our educational institutions, and to the largest degree our colleges and universities, have approximated more nearly to these scientific ideals than in any other country in the world. It is the scientific view-point, method and spirit that is imparted to the student from the beginning to the end of his training. If he does not gain these, he misses the supreme thing which his instructors desire above all things to teach. And let us bear in mind that the essence of these is—*knowledge based alone on verified facts*.

While this rapid development toward scientific ideals has been taking place in both our educational theory and practice, what has been happening in religion? Is there any sense in which the scientific view-point, method and spirit may be said to have captured religion as they have come to dominate education? Are the religious leaders, clergy and laity, possessed by the passion for knowledge that is based alone on verified

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facts? Of a few Christian scholars, scattered here and there, this is certainly true, as it is of a comparatively small number of church leaders. But the strength of the fundamentalist movement, as we are witnessing it at this very hour, only proves how pitiful is the minority of those in all churches who are seeking to carry the ideals of education into their religion.

For by far the great majority of conventionally religious men and women, the scientific approach to the problems of religion or of human life is absolutely unknown. To them the authority in religion is not the supreme authority of truth, it is rather the authority of an institution or a creed or a book. The only pathway they know to knowledge in religion is the pathway of faith, not the pathway of verified facts, and it is faith conceived not as the sum total of a man's attitude toward life, but as something that is synonymous with belief in certain dogmas. To them the truth in religion comes not through earnest seeking until one finds the facts, but it comes through a "revelation" handed down through centuries to this modern age. And when the spirit of free inquiry begins to investigate the facts of this "revelation," the cry of heresy is immediately raised.

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How much do any of our churches know of the scientific approach to the moral or social or economic problems of today as compared with the outstanding men and women who are working in these particular fields in the educational world? Think how much of the home, foreign or city missionary work of the churches is carried on under ideals and according to methods that are leagues removed from scientific ideals! Remember how much of the benevolent and charitable work of the churches makes no attempt to get at the underlying causes of conditions that make for poverty and disease, immorality and crime, but only seek to assuage their surface symptoms!

I am not questioning the sincerity of any man, or of any organization, nor do I deny that a certain kind of "good" is being done through all these traditional and conventional methods. What I am trying to make clear is that organized religion, of whatever brand, in its fundamental conceptions of the universe, of human life, and of human relationships as these apply to religion, as well as in its method of approach to modern problems, is hopelessly antiquated and belated. It has scarcely been touched, much less transformed, by the scientific ideal and spirit as these

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have permeated and transformed education from top to bottom.

Whatever shortcomings there may be in modern education,—and there are many,—education today is unquestionably devoting itself more and more unreservedly to the realization of the ideals and the spirit of science in every branch of inquiry. While whatever good organized religion may be doing,—and it is assuredly accomplishing much good,—it has never dared as yet to surrender itself to the scientific ideals, and it knows little or nothing of the scientific spirit. To education, the pathway to knowledge is through the discovery and verification of facts. To religion, the pathway to knowledge is through faith which, in most instances, means belief in certain dogmas of the past.

This is the basic explanation of the fact that cannot be denied, though it is often glossed over, that there has come a serious separation between education and religion in our day, that a cleavage exists that fair words do not heal, that a gulf divides that no compromise can bridge. And the cause lies here: In all its thinking, its methods and its spirit, education has become scientific; while in all its thinking, its methods and its spirit, religion has remained pre-scientific.

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Having pointed out the fact that such a gulf of separation does exist between education and religion, I want to emphasize just as strongly another fact,—that *our modern conceptions both of education and of religion are essentially the same*, and that if we could but clearly grasp these conceptions and come to realize how fully they express the soul of both education and religion, the gulf of separation that now exists would be filled in and the world might have a new lease of light and life.

It is difficult to find a definition of education that is wholly satisfactory. The best of them seem to leave something out. I would like to recommend the defining of education as a possible exercise for private meditation. Let each one ask himself what he means by “education”; and if he ponders the question deeply he will discover that in order to answer it he will have to probe down to the innermost meaning of life itself. Thinking earnestly about the meaning of education compels us to face the big fundamental questions of life as we never have before. Such thinking, for example, reveals the fact that religion and education are not two separate things, but one thing; two only on the surface, but one in the ultimate foundations and the final aim. They

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are not two things that can say to one another: "You go your way and I will go mine," as they are inclined to say today; but things that must move together, and move in the same direction, if each is to attain its highest ends.

Is the goal of education knowledge? Assuredly yes, but knowledge for what? Is its goal power? Again yes, but power to what end? Is its goal social adjustment? The modern age replies emphatically, yes, but what kind of adjustment shall it be, and determined by what ideals? That education aims not at mere knowledge or mere power of any kind, but at knowledge and power put to right uses is clearly recognized by the most progressive educational thought, though not by the popular opinion of the day. That education therefore is both ethical and social in its end and its process, is clearly indicated in the following statements from modern leaders in the educational field:

William James: "Education cannot be better described than by calling it the organization of acquired habits of conduct and tendencies to behavior."

Herbert Spencer: "To prepare us for complete living is the function that education has to discharge."

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Arnold Tompkins: "The true end of teaching is one with the true aim of life; and each lesson must be presented with the conscious purpose of making the most out of the life of the one taught."

J. P. Monroe: "The question to be asked at the end of an educational step is not, 'What has the pupil learned?' but 'What has the pupil become?' "

As a still clearer conception of the modern idea of education let me quote from John Dewey, the foremost exponent of the "new education" in this country: "I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform. . . . I believe that education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness. . . . I believe that the school is primarily a social institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply the form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends. I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living."

If we let this last statement of John Dewey

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express for us the ideals of the "new education," we discover that, on this view, education is more than a science; it is a craft. As Samuel Butler put it, "Don't learn to do, but learn in doing." It is part of the great work of Sanderson of Oundle, with whose personality and methods Mr. H. G. Wells has recently acquainted us, that he asserts in all subjects, that real work amongst concrete problems is the ground out of which flowers any systematic thought about these problems which is worthy of the name. But Sanderson's work goes much farther than this. When he says that he wants scientific men to claim a larger share in the work of the world, and not to confine themselves to what is commonly called science, he is insisting on the extension of the scientific spirit in every field of thought and endeavor. By the duty and service of science which, let us keep in mind, has come to dominate modern education, Sanderson meant that scientific men should bring their ideal of life, their vision and their methods to the problems raised by the social structure which science has itself brought into being. "Our industrial life," he said, "is imperfectly organized; all our troubles are due to the fact that we have a process created by science, but organized in the old way by men of a differ-

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ent outlook." And so in his school he tried to replace explicit teaching by "finding out;" to substitute the laboratory for the classroom. Thus he made an appeal to the constructive impulse in his boys instead of to the acquisitive instinct. And it is his testimony that the boys soon ceased to have any desire to make anything for themselves. "What they love to do is to take part in some great work that must be done for the community, some work that goes beyond them, some great spacious work." Sanderson therefore felt that he could point out the way to hopeful advance when he said that the great thing was to enlist boys and girls in the service of man today and man tomorrow. And since to him, the ideal school was a model of the world to be, he believed that this same way is the path of advance for the world outside school.

The "new education" has for its great end, therefore, the training and development of the individual for social ends, that is, for the largest service to man. This involves the directing of whatever knowledge and power is gained through education to the highest moral and social ends.

If it is difficult to find a satisfactory definition of education, it is far more difficult to find a definition of religion that will satisfy the modern

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mind. All the old classic definitions either imply a conception of the supernatural that has been banished from modern thought, or else contain theological implications whose contents are no longer vital to our age. Let me give you the statement of Edward Scribner Ames in his book, "The Psychology of Religious Experience." He describes religion as "the consciousness of the moral and social values of life." Here is no suggestion of any supernatural, no hint of any theological implications whatever. To those, therefore, for whom religion is still bound up with conceptions of the supernatural or with the dogmas of some theology, this statement may seem to lack certain of the essential elements of religion as we have known it in the past, or as we hear it presented today.

But let us reflect for a moment on the history of all religions. The priest in religion always precedes the prophet. When the prophet appears, with his burning moral and social message, he finds religion all bound up with systems of metaphysics, with rituals and creeds, with the formalism of institutions of various kinds. And it is always his great mission to discover real religion and to liberate it from all the complexities of ritual and creed in which he finds it em-

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bedded. And so Buddha teaches his noble "Eight-fold Path" in which religion is set forth in simple terms of moral and social relationship, apart from all conceptions of theology; and in the Sermon on the Mount, where we have the summation of the teachings of Jesus, there is not a hint of creed or ritual, of theology or church as such, but rather, the enunciation of great principles for the conduct of life in its moral and social aspects. In the message of its great prophets religion has always been a social thing, that is to say, it has preached unity, it has broken down distinctions, it has practised brotherhood; in a word, dependent on the age and the environment, its prophets have always recognized and made supreme the moral and social values of life in contradistinction to the priest's emphasis upon the theological and ecclesiastical side of religion. The priestly conception of religion is always exclusive, while the prophetic conception is always inclusive; and in the inclusiveness of the prophet's message lies the foundation of all moral and social values.

If we could only free our minds from these priestly conceptions of religion, which have always been in the world but against which the true prophet of God in every age has always

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contended, and clearly grasp the prophetic conception as it has come down through the centuries in terms of man's moral and social life, it might not be so difficult for some of us to see that this modern statement of Ames contains the very heart and kernel of true religion, and that, regardless of creeds and organizations which change from age to age, and which have always been, and must always continue to be, different to different people, religion in its universal, its moral and its spiritual terms, is nothing else than the consciousness of the moral and social values of life. On this basis all good men and true are included in religion, regardless of creed or church, if only they have awakened to the moral and social values of life. The only men who could not be regarded as religious, regardless of their creed or church, would be those to whom the moral and social values of life had no meaning, and from whom they called forth no response.

In spite, then, of the gulf of separation that lies today between education and religion, judged by the most modern conceptions of the ideals and aims of both, as voiced by their foremost leaders, education and religion are essentially one,—they both have as their great end, though employing somewhat different means, the developing in man

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of the consciousness of the moral and social values of life.

The problem for this age thus becomes clear: *How can this essential unity between education and religion be grasped and realized by all, as it is today only by the few?* How can the existing gulf be bridged so that educationists and religious teachers, college professors and ministers, shall come to think of themselves as coöperators in a common task, while they work in different places and employ different means? How can all education become religious in the sense that we have defined religion, and how can all religion become educational, in the sense of accepting frankly the ideals and spirit and vision of science?

It is clear to my mind that the two *must* come into closer fellowship, that the time has come when the exigencies of the present age with all its baffling problems demand that they form a partnership, in which there shall be no attempt at domination on either side. In the new age that is dawning for both of them, they will sorely need each other's help. Education will have much to learn from essential religion as we are just beginning to glimpse it; but religion also will have just as much to learn from education. On the one hand, a religious spirit must enter into

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all education; on the other, an educational spirit must enter into all religion.

We commonly classify education under three heads,—primary, secondary and higher. To these three I should like to add a fourth, *highest*. The highest education is religion, but it *is* also education. There is a sense in which it needs to be prepared for by the three kinds which precede it in point of time, but there is a deeper sense in which the highest education should always be present in the other three, not directly but indirectly, like a background, an atmosphere, the clear and conscious vision of the end to be attained through the process of the education obtained in school and college, but even more, through the still broader education that never ceases in the larger school of life itself. That which begins as primary education should end in religion,—the clear, full consciousness of the moral and social values of life. And that which ends as religion should begin in primary education. Religion in the modern sense, and also in its purest form, too, might be defined as education raised to its highest power, even as our foremost leaders of education are visualizing it today.

It may be that there are some who feel that

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in thus making religion one with education I am, in a way, degrading religion, or placing it on a lower plane than it deserves to occupy. Instead of lowering religion I am seeking to elevate and broaden education. What I earnestly desire is to bring both religion and education so close to the real life of this modern age, to show the vital relation of both to the whole, all-around life of man, that the old, false and vicious divorce between a "secular" education on the one hand, and a "sacred" religion on the other, may be at length forever banished from the minds of men, and that together, in closest sympathy and co-operation, education and religion may do their supremely great work in developing in men and nations the consciousness of the moral and spiritual values of life.

Will education supplant religion in the future? It all depends upon whether their paths are to continue to diverge as at present, or whether in their ideals, methods and spirit they can be brought into closer fellowship and coöperation. If education can become infused generally with the vision of its *highest* end, as our leading educators see it today, and if religion can become permeated by the educational spirit as it seeks also the highest end, there is great hope for the

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future advance of mankind. Is there any possibility for the achievement of this desired coöperation? In my judgment, the possibility for thus broadening the vision of education is certain. I only wish I could feel confident that organized religion was as ready to become possessed of the educational spirit.

The greatest difficulty lies in the fact that the literalistic teachings of the fundamentalists and the evasive and compromising attitude of the modernists, for the past generation, have so habituated men and women to think of religion in terms of a supernatural world, or of the dogmas of some theological creed inherited from the past, that they seem utterly incapable of conceiving religion in terms of the living human experience of today. Even liberally minded religionists find it well-nigh impossible to abandon phraseology and surrender old view-points and conceptions in their religious thinking, that, if they stop to think, they will find are absolutely out of harmony with their scientific thinking. The pathos of the present religious situation is clearly apparent. In this crucial hour to which all the churches have come, the rank and file of the membership are left helplessly unable to understand the profound issues at stake, to form an intelligent opinion on

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the controversies involved, or even to think of religion in any other terms than those which have become obsolete for all intelligent minds,—and this tragic condition all goes back to the lack of real education in religion which the religious leaders have failed to give.

The supreme need is for the frank recognition of the fact that religion *is* because of what human nature is, that the many different forms it has taken in the past, in dogmas, rituals and institutions, have grown naturally out of the soil and environment of past ages, that because the growing knowledge of the race has made it impossible for man honestly today to believe in the older conceptions of a supernatural world, of an infallible Bible, of the miraculous, of a God with human passions and personal semblance, this is no reason why our modern age should not have the daring and the right to interpret its own religious experience in terms of today's knowledge, both of the universe and of life; as a matter of fact it *must* dare thus to interpret religion in harmony with all the available facts as we know them, or else religion will decline still more rapidly into the veriest superstition, and its influence in the life of man will grow less and less as education spreads ever more widely.

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What is required on the part of religious teachers especially, and religious people generally, is the intelligence and the will to make a drastic house-cleaning of their mental furnishings, especially as they apply to religion, and resolutely to free their minds of all those older conceptions of religion to which they have become habituated, not for the sake of abandoning religion but rather for the sake of re-interpreting religion in living terms. "If religious leaders would dare to come out into the open, if they would banish from their teaching all sophistry and evasion, if they would stand together without fear or equivocation, if they would only cease to be merely the critics of the old and obsolete, and could become possessed of the courage and intelligence to stand as the crusaders of a new and positive religious faith in the moral and social values of life, if they could take the raw materials of a genuine religious experience that are today lying all about us in confusion, and challenge and blend them into a constructive religious philosophy, touched into life by an enthusiastic and aggressive leadership," they could join hands with education in its lofty vision, and together, religion and education might indeed usher in a new day for humanity. But can they, will they thus

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respond to the insistent call of this modern age? The future alone will answer.

The religion of the past has dealt largely with the unknown, the mystical, the miraculous; it has depended on faith in dogma rather than in fact; it has cared little for the ideals of education, and has known even less of its spirit. The religion of the future, for which we are humbly helping to blaze the way, will deal chiefly with the known, the real, the natural; it will be animated by faith, but its faith will be founded on facts; it will approach all problems of life and of society in the scientific spirit. The religion of the future will consist of so relating our individual lives to the life of society as to insure the largest possible degree of truth, beauty and goodness in the life of mankind as a whole. To this end we must first come to understand and organize the inner structure of our minds, then we must organize our knowledge of the outer world, including society, and then, finally we must harmonize the two in a genuine living religious experience. And this is the supreme task of education and religion, as they shall one day learn how to work together in closest sympathy for the emancipation of men and the transformation of society.

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WILL RELIGION OUTGROW THE CHURCH?



IN A MOST illuminating and discriminating article on the present controversy in the churches, recently published in *The New Republic*, John Dewey, of Columbia University, closes his discussion with these words: "Looking at the present controversy from the outside, one may believe that it is thoroughly wholesome, humane and emancipating in effect, that it will make for tolerance and open-mindedness, greater sincerity and directness of experience and statement. And yet one may believe that it will not accomplish anything fundamental until the liberal protesting elements have cleared up their minds on at least just these two points: What is the relation of a specially organized community and institution like the church, whatever be the church, to religious experience? And what is the place of belief in religion, and by what methods is true belief achieved and tested?"

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It is this first question that I want now to consider: What, after all, is the relation of the church to religious experience? This is the primary question involved in our subject,—Will religion outgrow the church? In my judgment Dr. Dewey, in asking this question, has laid his finger on the fundamental issue in the present controversy. Can a church that conceives it to be its primary function to perpetuate the experience of men in the past, regardless of all the new light that has come into the world, possibly survive into the future? Or, must not the church, if it is to continue, become the actual embodiment of the living experience of men of today?

Every religious organization, at its inception, sprang naturally out of the soil of its time. It grew out of the experience of men then alive; it voiced those experiences and sought to satisfy them in terms of thoughts, and by means of methods that were meaningful and vital to the men of that day. But as time goes on, it is the fate of all organizations gradually to lag behind the constantly growing and expanding experiences of mankind. This is just as true of political and social institutions as it is of religious organizations. In a truly alive and healthful society the constant readjustment between the old

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organization or outward form, and the ever expanding experience of men takes place naturally with little or no struggle or friction; but more often the readjustment involves tremendous effort and many times unceasing struggle. The struggle that is to be witnessed everywhere in the world today, in our political, social, industrial, moral and religious life, may be defined as the struggle between the conservatives and reactionaries on the one hand, and the liberals and radicals on the other. But, in its deeper significance, it is really the struggle for readjustment between old organizations, forms and doctrines that grew out of former experiences in the past, and the actual living human experience of today which the old organizations, forms and doctrines no longer adequately represent or correctly interpret.

Our age is in the midst of a confusion of theories and ideals that inevitably have reacted on the idea of what constitutes a church. Our notions of the church have little to do with its founding, but they are all mixed up with those new thoughts on individualism and collectivism, on the evolution of society, on the relation of the state to the community, and on the relation of the church to the community. In the English

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establishment there are views varying from that of Maurice, with his doctrine of the church as standing for the nation in its spiritual aspect, to that of the Anglo-Catholics who seek to resuscitate the purely mediaeval view. The Protestant churches up until now, and even now in the majority of cases, have been the nurseries of individualism. Beyond these boundaries there are intellectuals like Seeley who, in his "Natural Religion," asks, "What then is the universal church but universal civilization?" Socialism, too, has attempted to formulate theories, at present none too clear, on this important feature of our common life.

It is not with these theories, however, that we are now concerned, but rather with the one question as to the relation of the church to experience. There can be no denying the fact that there is a widespread conviction that man's religious experience has outgrown the church, that the organization with its doctrines and ideals, its rites and ceremonies, no longer either voices or satisfies the religious needs of men, and that, therefore, religion must be found elsewhere than in the church. As evidence of this conviction we see the utter indifference, if not hostility, of large numbers of the intellectuals to churches of all

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kinds; and within the churches themselves we are witnessing the growing restlessness of "the modernists," both clergy and laity, under the ecclesiastical and doctrinal restrictions of the institution.

Mr. Stone, President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, said again this last week what we have heard constantly of late, that the Protestant churches had nothing for the working classes, that they cared nothing for them or their problems of life, and that therefore, the interest of the workers generally in the churches was steadily waning. The individualistic basis upon which the official creeds of Protestantism are all founded is utterly out of touch with the awakening social consciousness of the age. The exclusive sectarianism of Protestantism with its un-Christian rivalries and jealousies is an utter anachronism in an age whose noblest spirit is seeking for some kind of unity and coöperation. The springing up of all manner of new religious cults, entirely apart from the churches, which are attracting their hundreds of thousands of adherents, is only another evidence of the failure of the churches to satisfy certain religious needs in human nature.

But more convincing than all else is the fact

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that the younger generation is growing up with little or no interest in the churches of its fathers. It is easy enough to say, as many do, that the young people of today represent "an ungodly generation," and thus to throw the whole blame upon them that they do not flock in larger numbers to our churches, but I cannot take this view. The young people of today are probably no better or worse than those of yesterday. The basic needs of human nature have not changed, and human aspiration is always the same. But the young men and women, educated in our schools and colleges of today, have learned facts about the universe and themselves, have gained a viewpoint on life and have caught a spirit,—all of which combine to give them *an experience* that the average church does not seem to understand, much less to satisfy. According to their own statements, the church makes no appeal to them, sermons leave them cold, the theological phraseology is quite meaningless, and the so-called "church activities" impress them as trivial and picayunish. And yet no one seriously doubts that the young people of today possess moral and spiritual powers just as truly capable of development as they were in days gone by.

These facts, that no one can gainsay, seem to

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lead to but one conclusion: That however loyal the churches may be to experiences that were once real in the past, they are clearly failing to voice, to interpret or to satisfy the actual, living experience, of men and women of today. The simple fact is that religion has outgrown the church as it has been,—therein lies the secret of the present religious situation. The religious experience of living, growing men no longer feels itself at home within the old organizations of religion; it finds itself “cabined, cribbed and confined” not only within the ecclesiastical and doctrinal restrictions, but also within the moral and spiritual limitations of the churches as they are. Any organization that fails to root itself in the living experience of men is of necessity outgrown and, sooner or later, inevitably left behind. There is no reason to believe that the churches can escape this fate,—*unless* they can readjust themselves vitally to the experiences of modern men. This is the critical problem that the churches of Christendom are facing just now—readjustment, or gradual but sure extinction, while some new form of organization that can more adequately satisfy the religious needs of the new age, takes their place.

This evident failure of the churches adequately

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to meet the moral and spiritual needs of living, growing men and women has resulted in the feeling on the part of multitudes that religion is a purely personal thing after all, that churches and creeds, sermons and ceremonies are in no sense necessary to the religious life, that since "the kingdom of God is within" each individual, one can cultivate religion privately through reading and meditation and prayer. And thus an increasing number have fallen away from the churches who have in no sense abandoned religion; for them religion has become a private and personal matter. There is much to be said for this conception of religion. Religion does indeed begin in the inner life; it is a matter of the personal consciousness; it involves view-points, conceptions, attitudes that are in a deep sense personal and private. John Trotwood Moore has written a beautiful poem, entitled. "The Church of the Heart," that expresses most truly this conception of religion:

Deep in the dales of the human heart,
Deep in the dells of the soul,
Where the springs of the innermost passions start,
Where the brooks of hope and happiness part,
And the flowers of life unfold,
Is a temple whose vespers rise and swell,
Yet it hath no priest and it hath no bell.

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'Tis loftier far than the dome of the sky,
 'Tis deeper down than the sea;
It catches the gleam of the stars as they fly
And the music they make as they wander by
 With their heavenly minstrelsy.
Music—but whence no mortal can tell—
For it hath no priest and it hath no bell.

No glitter of tinsel, no blight of gold,
 No fashion of rank and lies,
No creeds in their confined urns of old
Where the dust lies deep on their hearts of mold;
 No altar where prides arise—
And yet no cathedrals in beauty excel,
Though it hath no priest and it hath no bell.

And here hath the crushed and the desolate prayed
 From the depths of their soul's despair;
And hither hath sad-eyed sorrow strayed,
And outcast Hope hath sobbed and laid
 Her head on the altar there.
And never anathema rings their knell,
For it hath no priest and it hath no bell.

Oh, glorious church of the heart divine
 (Oh, science priest to us all)
High o'er the world may your sweet dome shine,
With your silent priest in this heart of mine,
 And the image of love on your wall.
Oh, church of the heart, 'tis there God dwells,
Though it hath no priests and it hath no bells.

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While we all accept gladly the truth of these words, do they contain all the truth? Is the Church of the Heart to be the only church of the future? Or must it not inevitably lead out to the visible Church of All Hearts that have awakened to the moral and spiritual meaning of life? In other words, while in one sense religion is, and must always be, profoundly personal, in another and deeper sense, must it not also be intensely social? If true religion is that power, or that experience, that brings together and binds together, as the word, *religio*, etymologically means, how can "the religion of the heart" fail to bring us together with all other hearts? If we are indeed all "members one of another," then true gratitude is a gratitude given together, true worship is the lifting up of the common heart together, true service is the service we give together, the true life is the life we live together, in conscious fellowship and coöperation. Real religion must begin in the heart, but it never ends there. To realize its highest and best it must be brought into closest contact with the religion of other hearts and made to feel and know the spiritual unity that binds all men and women into one true brotherhood of aspiring and serving souls.

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Our problem then is not that of a religion that has outgrown all forms of organization. In some far off day, religion may succeed in so ethicizing and spiritualizing man's life that it may indeed become "one with civilization," but that time is not yet. The church is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The end it seeks is the Kingdom of God established here on this earth. Until that end is achieved there must be the organization of religion as well as the religion of the heart. The only question is, what kind of organization shall we have? All indications point to the fact that our present organizations of religion are increasingly out of touch with living human experience in its mental, moral and spiritual needs. The only church then, that can survive into the future is one that can more adequately voice and interpret and satisfy the religious needs of this age. If such a church does not now exist, can it be created? The motives that lie back of the Community Church movement sprang from the desire and purpose to create just such a church. In how far has this movement succeeded in meeting this critical need? In reply to these questions I want to attempt the daring task of outlining the kind of church that religion will not

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outgrow, simply because it will be related vitally to the living experience of men and women.

It is clear that out of the common, universal experience of men there emerged three fundamental religious needs, and that these needs have nothing necessarily to do with theology as such, with the rites and ceremonies of ecclesiasticism, or even with the Bible and its inspirations; the sources of these needs lie deep within human nature itself; and since it was these needs that originally created religion and all forms of its organization, it is these needs today that have the power to recreate religion and re-fashion new forms more adequate to its expression. These three universal needs may be defined as follows: (1) The need of a living faith in the ideal things of life; (2) The need of reflection on the meaning of our experience with the ideal things; and (3) The need of devoted service in the realization of these ideals.

The church, then, that is vitally related to living human experience must minister adequately to these three human needs, or to put it into other words, it must seek to satisfy the religious needs of men along the three fundamental lines of feeling, thinking and acting. First of all, then, the

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church that religion will not and cannot outgrow is the church that is able.

1. *To inspire and strengthen a living faith in the ideal things.* It is a man's grasp on the ideal things that alone gives permanence and value to his existence, and every man knows this to be true. We live our lives in a material universe, we ourselves are housed in physical bodies, and yet we know that the meaning and beauty and significance of our lives proceed not alone from those things that we see and hear and touch through our senses, but, still more, from those intangible things of faith and hope and love and aspiration. Without these, life is

"A tale told by an idiot,
Full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

But in the world of things in which we are so constantly immersed and enmeshed, it is the common experience with us all that faith loses its vision, and hope burns dim, and love is disillusioned, and aspiration falters, and "we stretch lame hands" to regain once more those priceless treasures of which the world of things has seemingly robbed us. How shall we catch again the vision we have lost? Where shall we regain our

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faith in the ideal values of life? It is this profound and universal need that the real church should meet and satisfy. But how?

One answer has been, through worship as men come together in some common religious meeting-place. This answer is still true, provided we clearly understand what is meant by worship. In the life of primitive man worship began in the attempt either to placate the wrath of some god or gods, or else in the endeavor to win their favor. It is also true that the forms of worship as employed in both Catholic and Protestant churches today imply, to a greater or less degree, the ideas of primitive man. Such ideas of God are utterly impossible to intelligent people today, and for this reason the conventional forms of worship are either meaningless or repugnant to most thinking people.

But there is a meaning in worship that has not been outgrown. I like to use another word that does not suggest the old false meanings in "worship"—the word, *reverence*. It is an attitude that one takes toward life and his fellows, or more accurately, an attitude one may take toward the ideal possibilities of life and his fellows. It is a moral and spiritual reaching out to something above oneself, something that lies beyond present

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attainments; it is aspiration at its highest and best. One may call the objects of aspiration, Truth, or Goodness, or Beauty, or the Infinite, or the Moral Values of Life, or by the familiar word, God, that gathers up in itself the best we know and the highest we feel. The name does not matter, but the attitude is profoundly essential.

Coupled with this faith in the Highest, there is the still deeper need of a faith in ourselves and in our capacities to achieve the highest. This attitude of reverence toward "the Highest," which is the soul of true worship, springs from the profound feeling side of our natures; it lies deeper than words or definitions, than formulas or dogmas. It leads to a sense of dependency on others; it awakens the consciousness of our essential unity with all of life; it brings peace and quiet joy into one's inner life. It is difficult to describe apart from terms of feeling, of consciousness, of something that is felt and sensed within. But the sum total of the effect is to make real the things of the ideal realm, or as Felix Adler puts it, "the growing conviction and the clearer vision of the eternal spiritual universe as real."

What are the means by which these feelings of reverence for the ideal things are to be inspired

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and strengthened? The answer involves the whole question of the place of symbolism in religion. We have the ritualistic churches with their elaborate liturgical services on one hand, and then we have the service of the Ethical Culture Society, which consists simply of brief readings, instrumental music and the address. It is this problem that Dr. Guthrie is seeking to meet down at St. Mark's Church, New York, in his experiments with different colored lights, with special music, and with the eurythmic dances. In my judgment Dr. Guthrie is right in emphasizing the primacy of feeling in religion; he is wrong in minimizing the moral and intellectual aspects of religion. What he is seeking is to awaken through the symbolism of the service the religious feeling and attitude. Whether he has found the best means to this desired end may be an open question.

Thus all of the service of worship, simple or elaborate as it may be, is for the sake of evoking in us the attitude of reverence for the Highest, and bringing us face to face once again with the ideal things of life. The sermon, as the climax of the service, has nothing else but this as its great end and aim; for unless the sermon, whatever its subject may be, serves to send men and

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women back into life "with the growing conviction and the clearer vision of the eternal spiritual universe as real," it has failed of its purpose. This should be the ideal for every church,—that by every wise and legitimate means it shall be able to inspire and strengthen a living faith in the ideal things, and thus minister to the feeling side of religion in human nature. How far any church succeeds in this aim may be questioned, but this is the aim nevertheless, and there is always room for development in the experiments that are being made to bring the church into more vital relations to the living religious experience of men.

2. The church that religion will not outgrow *is the church that is able to lead and stimulate reflection on the meaning of experience and the significance of the great ideals.* A prominent Episcopal layman said to me recently, "the difference between my church and yours is this: I go to church to feel, while people go to your church to think." At first thought, I felt complimented, but the more I reflected on his remark the less certain I became. If he was right in his statement, then both his church and ours are at fault, for each of us is neglecting one of the fundamental religious needs in human nature. His church is minimizing the thinking side, and our church

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is neglecting the feeling side of religion; whereas the church vitally related to man's living experience would minister to both needs.

The profound need for reflection, if religion is to be more than the passing mood, must be self-evident to all intelligent people. Every human experience always consists of two things: (1) the outward event or circumstance, and (2) the inward interpretation of the event or circumstance. Nothing ever gets into us, as it were, from the outside, or becomes an actual part of our own "experience," until we have put our inward interpretation upon it. "This power to transform facts so that they will be no longer merely facts, but facts plus an interpretation, is one of the most distinctive and significant elements in human life. The animals do not possess it. An event befalls a dog and, when the dog is through with it, the event is what it was before. The dog has done nothing to it. But the same event befalls a man and at once something begins to happen to it. It is clothed in a man's thought about it; it is surrounded with his appreciation and understanding; it is transformed by his interpretations. The event comes out of that man's life something altogether different from what it was when it went in. For

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our experiences do not fall into our lives in single lumps, like meteors from a distant sky of fate; our experiences always are made up of the fortunes that befall us and the construction that we put upon them, on the facts as we come to know them and the interpretations that we put upon those facts."

It is just here that we realize the need of reflection in religion for it is through reflection alone that we discover the interpretation of facts or events and their bearing on our lives and the life of society. On its thinking side, religion has always sought to bring man the interpretation of the facts of life in moral and spiritual terms. This is one of the fundamental needs of human existence. The reason that religion has persisted down through the centuries is because, constituted as he is, man is not content to live in a universe of uninterpreted facts. Men want to know what life means spiritually; they want to know that "it means intensely and means good." The demand, therefore, is for a church that can lead and stimulate reflection on the meaning of the facts of life. Never was this demand greater or more insistent than today. The world has been flooded with new knowledge about everything—from stars to stones, from

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amoeba to man. And yet, as Professor Robinson points out, this vast accumulation of facts by modern science is not yet correlated or coordinated; it is tucked away in all sorts of technical books, scientific magazines, laboratories of universities, etc., so that the average man either cannot, or does not know how to get at it. And when Professor Robinson pleads for the humanization of knowledge, he is demanding the interpretation and meaning of all this new knowledge and its bearing upon human life. We have the facts today, or at least the facts are available, that might make a new heaven and a new earth, but how many are there as yet who really see and understand the full significance of all these new facts for human life, and especially, for man's moral and spiritual development?

Greater than all else is the need for a fresh and living interpretation of the moral ideals of life, and still more, for a clear and definite explanation of how they can be applied not only to the individual life but also to the social, economic, industrial and international relations of men and of nations. What is the "good life"? What does it mean, in this age, to live the good life? How many can answer intelligently these

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questions? And yet, upon our answers depends our own moral development, as well as the moral and spiritual values of civilization. Is not the muddled condition of affairs everywhere due, more than all else, to ignorance of the real meaning of goodness, of righteousness, of justice, and of love in terms of today's life, and the lack of any clear knowledge as to how these ideals can, or should be translated into the manifold relations of man's life in this modern age? It is upon these things that we must begin to reflect in dead earnest, if we are ever to solve aright our pressing and critical problems.

The interpretations and meanings of life as they are taught by the average church are based upon conceptions of the universe and of life, of human nature and of human relationships that the facts of modern science have utterly disproved, with the result that men and women of this generation who have been taught the facts of modern science and who then turn to the church for the moral and spiritual interpretations of these facts are met with a denial of the facts; and it is no wonder that they turn away in disgust from religious interpretations and meanings that they know are based not upon fact but upon fiction or merest superstition. Still, for

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all such, the imperious demand of human nature remains unchanged—a real need, yes, and a hunger, too, for a reasonable interpretation of all this accumulation of new knowledge in terms of the moral and spiritual life of man. Here lies the great duty as well as the challenging opportunity for the church that is vitally related to living human experience. The church that can help men think reflectively on the meaning of life's experiences, and that can lead men in a reasonable interpretation of the available facts of life in their moral and spiritual bearing is the church that religion will never outgrow.

For example, here are the facts of Biblical scholarship as respects the Bible,—who wrote its various books, when they were written, to whom they were written, with what purpose, its historical mistakes, its discrepancies, etc. If we accept these facts of scholarship we must give over entirely all conception of an infallibly inspired book, as held by the fundamentalists. But the questions still remain: What does the Bible mean? Has it any truth for my life? Can I still derive any help or inspiration from its pages, and if so, how?

Or take the doctrine of evolution. We may search out all the facts, and become familiar with

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all the lines of evidence, and as a result we may become firm believers in the law of evolution. But the question still remains: What does this law mean for human life? Does it mean what Herbert Spencer and others in the last part of the nineteenth century thought it meant,—that some impersonal power called “evolution” was going to carry man steadily on toward the millennium, whether or no, regardless of what man did or did not do? Does it mean that we may trace this stupendous process going on from the beginning of time in obedience to mechanical laws merely, with no purpose, no meaning, no objective goal? Does it mean that man is only the last product of this mechanical process and that, therefore, human life possesses no intrinsic significance, and that all man’s concern for moral and spiritual values is only the result of his egoistic imaginings? Does it mean that evolution controls man, or that man can direct evolution? It is one thing to know the facts of evolution, it is quite another thing to interpret correctly the deeper meaning of those facts. And how one interprets evolution has tremendous influence upon the incentives and motives and ideals of life.

Or, there are the teachings of psychology which reduces man’s mental life to its physical basis.

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We may accept all the facts as to the part the nervous system plays in our feelings, our perceptions, our thoughts and our acts. But the question still remains: What do these facts mean for my personal life? Is my mental life to be identified with molecular changes in the brain, or is it only the accompaniment of these changes? Is there an ego or self, or am "I" merely the sum total of a highly developed nervous system? Is my feeling, thinking, volitional life absolutely determined, or is there any sense in which I am "free"? Are all my thoughts, feelings, loves, hopes, aspirations, the direct products of my brain and nervous system, or are they conditioned by them? It is one thing to know the facts of psychology, it is a very different thing to know how to interpret those facts aright; and there are today wide differences of opinion as to how they should be interpreted. But what these facts mean to me cannot fail to have tremendous influence upon what life means to me, and upon what I seek to do with my life.

Or, we may take the facts of present social and world conditions, so far as we are able to get the correct facts. Still the question remains: What do these facts mean? What is their significance? What do they portend for the future?

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We may interpret these facts solely in terms of pessimism, cynicism and despair; we may see no hope of ever "changing human nature" and, therefore, no hope of ever achieving a better world for men. Or we may see in the present social upheavals, in the breakdown of the political state, in the chaotic confusion of morals and religion, the passing away of an old and outgrown form of civilization in order that the new and better form may be builded. The shadows that fill the world today may indeed prove to be but the darkness that precedes the dawning of a new and nobler day for humanity. Whichever view we take cannot help but have a tremendous influence upon the part we play and the efforts we put forth in changing conditions that are, to conditions that ought to be.

3. The church that religion will not outgrow is *the church that is able to lead men out into practical and intelligent forms of human service, and thus lead towards the realization of the ideal things*. There is only one supreme test of religion. It is not the depths of feeling that may be awakened in us by the beauty of any church service; neither is it the thought that may be stirred by any sermon; it is only when we take the feeling and the thought that have been

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aroused and translate them resolutely into definite, concrete forms of service to our fellows that we become truly religious. Only as we act are we religious; all else is merely preliminary,—the means to the end, and that end—the life of service to others. Merely to attend church, to have one's feelings touched, or one's mind stirred, and then, not *to do*,—anything, is from the psychological view-point a crime against one's self, since the law for feeling and thought is that they must be translated into action; from the religious view-point it is nothing more than a kind of spiritual debauch which leaves us vastly worse off than we were before.

It is at this point, perhaps, more than at any other, that the churches fail to lead. When thought and feeling are stirred it is the natural thing for human beings to turn to action, but usually there is a wide gap between the ideals and teachings of the pulpit and the way in which these are to be applied in definite and concrete forms. It is so easy to picture conditions as they are; it is comparatively easy to describe conditions as they ought to be. But the most difficult thing of all is to tell people just what they can *do* to change conditions for the better. The tendency for most sermons is to describe conditions

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or picture the ideals in glowing terms, and then to taper off into general statements that are true and beautiful enough, but that leave the congregation, as it were, in mid-air, dangling between heaven and earth. Such sermons end at just the point where they ought to begin; however high into the heaven of ideals a sermon may take one, it ought always to finish on the earth. I cannot escape the feeling that every sermon ought to begin its last paragraph with some such words as these: "And now, after all that has been *said*, *what are we going to do about it?*"

The most truly effective sermons are those that point the way most directly toward some kind of concrete action. The real test as to whether a sermon has helped us is whether it sends us out into the world *to be* different, and *to do* definitely for others in some helpful way.

It is thus that I would answer the challenge contained in Dr. Dewey's question, What is the relation of the church to religious experience? The church must spring out of the actual living experience of today. It must voice and interpret and satisfy the religious needs of human nature. To that end, the only church that religion will not outgrow will be the church that knows how to inspire and strengthen a living faith in the

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ideal things, that is able to lead and stimulate reflection on the meaning of the experiences of life, and that has the power and intelligence to lead men out into the practical realization of the ideals through concrete forms of service to humanity.

To build that true church of God and man is our supreme opportunity. It is John Brierley who says: "More and more clearly do we see that the Church of the future will be a free community of souls, in whom the full powers of personality will be developed, whose government will be from within and not without, where the mind's freedom will be a willing subjection to the laws of highest thinking, and the soul's liberty that of joyous obedience to the law of love."

XI

CONVICTION AND KINDLINESS:

THE WAY TO BROTHERHOOD



IN John Galsworthy's well-known play, entitled "Strife," we have set before us the last stages of a long strike that has taken place in the Trenartha Tin Plate Works. The chief action of the play revolves around a series of conferences held between the Directors of the Company and a Committee of the workmen. In the course of the conferences the results of the long-drawn-out fight are made clearly plain. The workmen have been reduced to absolute want, and their families—women and little children—are on the verge of starvation and suffering from the cold of a severe winter; many of them are sick as the direct result of their deprivations caused by the strike. The Company has lost fifty thousand pounds and the stockholders are clamoring for dividends; besides, competitors are cutting into the business seriously. The Chairman of the

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Board holds out doggedly for his policy of a fight to the finish. He presents all the old stock arguments why the demands of the workers must be refused, no matter what the cost to the Company or to the men and their families. The Chairman of the workmen's committee, on the other hand, refuses on behalf of the men to concede a single item in their demands. And thus the struggle comes once again to a deadlock, with the feeling of bitterness inflamed on both sides.

Just as this crisis has been reached, the news comes of the death of the wife of Roberts, the Chairman of the workmen's committee, from starvation and cold. In the revulsion of feeling that follows, both groups brush their respective leaders aside and come to terms, and the strike is settled. A moment later the secretary of the Board turns to the Trades Union official and says excitedly, "Do you know, sir—these terms, they're the *very same* we drew up together, you and I, and put to both sides before the fight began? All this—all this—a woman dead, and the two best men broken—and—and what for?"

These last words of the play reveal with startling clearness the true meaning of all strife, whatever form it may take, with its tragic waste both

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material and spiritual—its losses that can never be made good. As the play makes clear, in every form of human strife there are always strong convictions on both sides—convictions made up of many elements—ideas, opinions, beliefs, so-called “principles,” and these, all bound together by personal or partisan feelings; neither side willing to concede an inch, each holding out obstinately for the letter of the law and forgetting its spirit. And in all such strife, whether individual or industrial or international, does not reflection make us feel that a little more of the spirit of humanity, a little deeper understanding of the other side, a little less insistence on individual or collective rights in view of human duties, a little willingness to forgive and forget, in short, just an influx of human kindliness with the temper of heart and mind which it creates, would do more to banish our differences, to dissolve our prejudices, to bring our divided humanity together in the spirit of coöperation and fellowship, than anything else in all the world?

My plea, therefore, is for more of kindliness in all our human relations, if we are ever going to solve our great and complex problems. This does not mean that I would disparage by a single iota the need of convictions in the tasks that lie before

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us. It is not less, but vastly more conviction that is needed, but conviction clarified, broadened, deepened and brought into harmony with all the facts. We do assuredly need "more mind," that shall consist of a quickened intelligence far wider and better adapted to the problems we confront, with all their many implications and their far-reaching significance. But convictions, ideas, beliefs, however true they may be, can never become effective and will never lead to brotherhood unless they are suffused, permeated and vitalized by the spirit of human kindliness. It is convictions *and* kindliness, then, for which I plead, if we are to build that better world for which we yearn.

This is in no sense a new message; it is as old as religion. Every great prophet of religion has always laid the supreme emphasis upon love as the *summum bonum* of life. Jesus of Nazareth summed up the teachings of both the law and the prophets in the one word, *love*, and many of his followers have indeed enshrined love in the central citadel of their lives. St. Francis of Assisi, who has been called the most Christ-like man after Jesus, was the "slave of love." He lived as nearly the selfless life as we can conceive; his love went forth freely to all men and women and

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little children, and even to the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. His entire life was devoted to service for others. But St. Francis lived at a time when no man dared to believe that this world, as such, could be made any better. The world belonged to the Devil and in due time was bound to go to destruction; only the few within the Church would be saved. No one disputes the fact that St. Francis lived a beautiful and useful life, and his character has been, and is, an inspiration to countless others as an example of the way in which love can control and banish the selfish impulses of human nature.

But because of the limitations of his age, St. Francis never dreamed that the world itself could be saved. He had no convictions that society could ever be transformed. He knew nothing about social theory and he never formulated a social program. He knew the secret of kindness, but he knew nothing of the forces and factors that made society what it was, much less could he have conceived of any method or technique whereby they could be moulded and directed to higher ends. His love was a beautiful and an admirable thing, but it was shorn of its power in bringing to realization human brotherhood, because it lacked the other thing needed—

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the vision, the ideas, the convictions as to how the great end could be achieved.

This makes clear why organized religion has failed, up to the present, in the realization of human brotherhood. When we remember that social religion, in the sense that we use those words today, is a comparatively recent thing, and that the conviction that it is the business of religion to transform human society and not simply "to save" a few individual lives and see them safely through this wicked world to some distant heaven of bliss, has only just begun to grip some of the churches, and that, even now, our fundamentalist friends in all the churches still firmly believe that this is the Devil's world and can never be made any better, we can understand why human brotherhood still seems to tarry in the far distance.

Organized religion, to be sure, has professed to preach a Gospel of Love down through the centuries, but not always consistently; it has been so mixed up with a dogmatic teaching of creeds that always divide and of a sectarianism that inevitably separates, that its power has been largely vitiated. But it is even more clear today that unless love is translated into its social terms, unless we know what it means "to love our

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neighbor as ourselves" in a society like ours, unless the "love" that religion prescribes is applied intelligently to all the manifold relations of life, it tends to become merely a sentimental thing without depth or meaning. When we speak, therefore, of the "failure of organized religion," what we mean is that the churches have been long on talking about love, but short on practising it and, especially, in applying it to social relationships. In a word, organized religion has believed in love as a beautiful sentiment, at least in theory, but it has lacked the other thing—the vision, the ideas, the intelligence, the convictions as to how the principle of love could be translated into the life of society. Hence its failure to realize human brotherhood.

But if organized religion with its teachings of love has failed to transform society and usher in the brotherhood of man because it has never yet combined with its love the intelligent convictions as to how love might be made the basic principle for the reorganization of society, it is just as true that, again and again, the enunciation of clear and sound convictions as to what might be done to gain a better world have failed of fulfilment simply because the spirit of love to

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make them effective has been lacking in the hearts and minds of men.

In 1795 Immanuel Kant published his famous essay on "Perpetual Peace." As Edwin D. Mead says: "Immanuel Kant's 'Perpetual Peace,' and his collateral writings, are the Magna Charta, the Declaration of Independence of the International World, its independence of that militarism, imperialism, and 'bastard patriotism' which constitute the original sin of nations and have kept mankind in hate, fear, suspicion, jealousy and eternal war. . . . Kant showed the world a century before Edith Cavell died for the truth, that 'patriotism' is not enough! He showed us, a century before Goldwin Smith declared it, that 'above all nations is humanity,' and that any statesman who does not make that principle the corner-stone of his policy is doomed to certain failure. The follies of a whole generation of Treitschkes and Bernhardis had been exposed and undermined in advance by Germany's own greatest thinker as by no other, showing for all who cared to understand, where militarism and absolutism inevitably lead; and his words are still written on the sky for all who will heed them."

As a reasonable and practical statement of

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principles that would make for world peace, most intelligent people would accept Kant's program. But as Kant himself proved in the Critique of Pure Reason, the rational by no means exhausts the whole man. The difficulty comes when we remember how many irrational factors there are in human nature—selfishness, greed, short-sightedness, inhumanity, etc., impulses and motives that cut directly across reason and logic. If we are ever to secure world peace the reasonable and logical principles must be combined with an intelligent technique adapted to the conditions of the age; but beyond these conditions there must be the awakening and education of the moral nature in man to the point where it is able to control all the lower impulses in men and nations, and thus furnish the great dynamic of kindness and good-will that must find expression if the principles that make for peace are to be effective. This is only an illustration of the ineffectiveness of sound convictions or true principles, simply because the atmosphere of kindness in which alone they can be put into execution is absent. This is the reason that so many of our present-day convictions as to the way to peace fall short of realization; the will to make them effective is wanting because that

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temper of mind and heart in men and nations that we call kindness seems to have vanished strangely from our life.

It certainly needs no fresh arguments to prove that kindness on the part of men and nations is the greatest need of our age? Of "convictions," both true and false, we have enough and to spare. We are printing them in countless books and papers; we are talking them continuously from pulpit and platform; we are arguing, debating, discussing them on every street corner; we are shouting our particular shibboleths from the housetops; we enter into controversy with almost everyone we meet. But with all our ideas, beliefs, convictions, we seem to get no whither. We walk around in circles and come back to the place we started. Our "convictions" do not seem "to get across" to others; we persuade few and convince none; and as a result, progress lags in all directions. What is the trouble? When you ask someone the question he shakes his head mournfully and replies, "I don't know. It's a strange age we are living in. It's talk, talk, talk—argue, argue, argue—but nothing *doing*; the springs of action seem to be paralyzed at their source."

But there is a simpler answer. You remember

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Matthew Arnold's definition of culture. He called it the combination of "sweetness and light"—the light of clear, full knowledge *plus* the temper of good-will, the disposition of kindness. When John Galsworthy was in this country the last time, in one of his public addresses he said that the trouble with this age was that we had forgotten to be gentlemen, we had lost the art of simple courtesy, we no longer knew how to be considerate of others, much less of their opinions. He said we were, often all unconsciously, rough, brutal, impatient, intolerant, cruel, in what we did to others and what we said about others; we no longer regarded gentleness as a virtue; and as a result, we were losing all those finer qualities of character that make the true gentleman or gentlewoman. Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the poet-philosopher of India, who recently visited in Milan, is reported to have told the Italians that Europe is troubled by a lack of love, that peace is something spiritual that grows in the heart and cannot be forced by command. At Turin his arrival was anticipated with much joy, but the people were bitterly disappointed when told by the authorities that he would not be allowed to speak because his doctrines smacked of Communism.

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Bertrand Russell, who combines in a marked degree those qualities of culture which Matthew Arnold called "sweetness and light," sums it all up in his "Icarus," where he says: "Science has not given men more self-control, more kindliness, or more power of discounting their passions in deciding upon a course of action. It has given communities more power to indulge their collective passions. . . . The heart is as important as the head. By the 'heart' I mean for the moment, the sum-total of kindly impulses. Where they exist, science helps them to be effective; where they are absent, science only makes men more cleverly diabolic. . . . And so we come back to the old solution: only kindliness can save the world."

These are not the words of a sentimental religionist, but of a hard-headed philosopher who has given the world many books in which he emphasizes the "conviction" side of our present-day problems. He has striven as earnestly as anyone for the "light," the knowledge, the technique that may make possible the realization of a larger measure of brotherhood in this world. But when he has given us all his opinions and theories, he comes back to the conclusion, that "only kindliness can save the world."

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Are these men right in their attempts to diagnose the malady of our age? Is the lack of love, the absence of kindness, the really fundamental obstacle to progress toward peace and fellowship? Let us think for a moment. The very word, love, has well-nigh lost its great meaning for this age. The war drove it out of most pulpits and banished it from most human hearts. To the majority of people it has been narrowed to the sphere of the home and the family. It is treason to speak of loving one's enemies; it is disgraceful to talk of love for those of another race; one loses standing if he looks with loving interest upon those of another class. To use the word love in connection with statesmen and rulers, or with the life of nations, or in regard to international readjustments, brings the smile of scorn to the lip, or condemns one, as in the case of Tagore, as a Communist. The word love no longer has a respectable standing in the larger life of men. Very few of us still believe in love as "the greatest thing in the world."

We *do*, however, cherish our "convictions"—often with a vengeance—whether as conservatives or radicals, laborites or capitalists, republicans, democrats, socialists or communists, fundamentalists or modernists; but, in all our varied

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partisanship we talk and argue and often fairly shout our convictions in anything but the spirit of kindliness. We carry our convictions as if they were chips on our shoulders, and we strut around defying others to knock them off. In like manner we regard the convictions of others, who may differ from us, as chips which we must knock off. We seldom argue a question solely on its merits, but we tend to become personal and soon begin heaping abuse upon individuals. We find it hard even to talk about peace without becoming belligerent in our pacifism. A hostile note creeps into all our discussions. We become suspicious of others; and we end by questioning the sincerity of all those who do not agree with us.

We are consumed by a social discontent, but as Glenn Frank has remarked recently, we shall never get anywhere until our social discontent becomes a scientific discontent. His meaning becomes clear when we remember that the wrongs of today are not so much due to individuals as to institutions. So long as we are satisfied to remain merely "socially discontent," our discontent is pretty apt to vent itself in personal spleen and abuse of those whom we regard as responsible for the injustices of society. This spirit, in turn,

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reacts on the one who harbors it, creating bitterness of heart and anger of mind against individuals as such, and by just that much, blinding one's eyes to the real question at issue.

When we begin to see, however, that the actual trouble lies in the maladjustments of our form of civilization, of which all individuals are the victims, and that the only solution of the problems involved lies in a scientific approach to these problems—in a disinterested and dispassionate attempt to find out what is wrong, why it is wrong, and how the wrong can best be righted in justice to all, then our bitterness and anger disappear in the earnest and intelligent effort to solve the problems scientifically. It is the difference between the man whose car breaks down and who is content to walk around it and talk loud and angrily about the accident, the loss of time, inconvenience, etc., and the mechanic at the garage, who doesn't lose his temper but quietly crawls under the car, finds out what is the matter, makes the proper adjustment and then starts it running again. Social discontent, for the most part, is talking loud, getting angry and heaping abuse upon people, while scientific discontent is studying the problem presented and then finding the best solution, but keeping your

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temper meanwhile. It is the difference between trying to solve our social problems in the spirit of kindness, or in the spirit of hostility, of bitterness and of anger; and today, it is this last spirit, unfortunately, that for the most part governs our lives.

The influence of kindness in the adjustment of all our human relationships must be self-evident to all. It is kindness alone that creates the atmosphere in which prejudices are overcome, misunderstandings are dissolved, differences are adjusted and agreements are reached. Even more important, kindness brings the best in human nature to the surface and gives it a chance to find expression, in spite of all the selfishness and greed to which we are prone. How many times in a group of angry, prejudiced people, one kindly person, with patience and tact, has been able to bring harmony out of discord and thus achieve desired results! The numerous conferences held since the war between the representatives of the nations have seemed to yield little or nothing in the way of harmony and peace, but it is not inconceivable that some day these representatives may come together in a kindlier atmosphere, and that then worth-while and far-reaching decisions may be made.

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But again, kindliness is the power that breaks down opposition. Bertrand Russell suggests that if M. Poincaré had taken a kindly attitude toward the Ruhr miners, Lord Curzon to the Indian Nationalists, Mr. Smuts to the natives of what was German South West Africa, or the American Government to its political prisoners, the world might be leagues nearer to peace and brotherhood than it is today. As we look back upon subsequent events, it is not difficult to visualize a very different kind of Peace Conference than the one that sat at Versailles. We can, at least, imagine a Conference, in possession of all the facts, that should have sought in the spirit of kindliness to heal the open wounds of war, to do justice to all the peoples, great and small, and to pave the way for a United States of Europe. Do you think that if this had been the atmosphere at Versailles, we should be facing the conditions that exist in Europe today? The opposition and bitternesses and hatreds we now face would have long since vanished. You say, "that is too much to expect of human nature, especially of political states." Perhaps, and yet if Bertrand Russell is right, it is only kindliness exercised by nations in their dealings with each other that will ever save the world. It must come

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some day, but it will only come when the moral evolution of men and nations has gone much farther than at present.

But lastly, it is kindness that furnishes the dynamic without which the will to achieve is powerless. We have our convictions, our ideals, our theories, yes, and our practical programs too—but we seem to be able to push them just so far and then they stick at something, and we fail of achievement. I venture to think that we have, all about us today, sufficient conviction and intelligence to take the first steps, at least, toward peace and world reorganization, and I dare to believe that there are enough men and women in all the countries who are ready for these first steps and eager to put them into effect. But here is the difficulty: The really progressive people in all lands are not united; they are separated by so many things—race, religion, party, class, etc. If on occasion a few of us do manage to get together, we immediately begin falling out among ourselves over what is usually some mere technicality that has little to do with the main issue. And so our dreams come to naught. If there were more of kindness in our hearts and in our personal attitude to one another, we would minimize our differences instead of magnifying

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them as we do now, and *together* we might indeed proceed to translate our fundamental convictions into action. It is "the propulsive power of a new affection" that the world needs most today, that will lift us out of the "rough, brutal, intolerant, inhumane" state into which John Galsworthy says we have fallen, and then flood our lives with the temper of kindness in our attitude toward all mankind.

Let me illustrate briefly the way this spirit has worked in human history whenever it has been given a chance. In the old Russia, we know the attitude taken by the government toward the progressive and radical thinkers. It was the policy of suppression and repression; it involved the spy system, imprisonment, Siberia, death. This policy—the opposite of kindness—led directly to the revolution of 1905. No one questions but that it was responsible for the form that the revolution took in Russia in 1918. The iron-hand policy of the Russian Government through many years had aroused an opposition, engendered a bitterness and created a hatred in the hearts of the people that waited only the opportunity to revenge itself on the oppressor. And when the time was ripe, the outraged victims of such intolerable tyranny struck back and de-

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stroyed the old régime root and branch. The old government knew no kindliness for the people, and Russia today is paying the penalty for the past of cruelty and wrong.

Take England, on the other hand. During the same period the growing power of labor in England was bringing that country steadily nearer to revolution. But in accordance with her long-established policy of toleration, there was little or no disturbance, no attempt at ruthless repression, no wholesale arrests or imprisonments. And when the revolution came and Ramsay MacDonald, with his labor cabinet, took over the reins of government of the British Empire, there was no disorder, not a drop of blood was shed, and the conservatives gracefully accepted this radical change in the ordering of their national affairs. In England, at least in its home policy, we have a good illustration of the way in which great and radical changes in political and social life can be brought about without force or violence, through a certain kindliness of temper manifested by both sides to the peaceful struggle.

The opium conferences held in the fall of 1924 at Geneva furnish another illustration of the need of just human kindliness in the solution

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of such moral problems in the world's life. As we followed the proceedings of these conferences in the papers we noted how the first conference ended in a deadlock, and how the second conference that opened January 12th at first faced the same deadlock again. At the first conference, with England, France, Holland and Portugal all saying that they couldn't possibly stop opium smoking in their colonies because of the smuggled opium from China, Japan rose up and showed these nations a plan which is bringing excellent results in Formosa, which they might all follow if they honestly wished to end the evil. The East teaching the West, and, more humiliating still, appealing to the West in the name of all the great Christian principles, decency, humanity and fair play!

As Ellen La Motte, writing from Geneva said: "The opium problem is so vast and complicated, its roots go so deep into the social, economic, financial and political fabric of so many countries, that with the best will in the world, it is tremendously difficult to solve. But without that will, it is insoluble. The first requisite is the *attitude toward drugging*. As long as any nation, large or small, regards drugging as something to be continued, condoned, excused

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and defended, no progress can be made." Note, the "first requisite is the attitude toward drug-ging." This involves the human rather than the economic attitude, the unselfish concern for the well-being of men and women rather than the selfish motive of profit-making, in a word, it means the temper and spirit of kindliness on the part of the nations that must solve this world problem.

The same principle applies to all problems which the nations must increasingly discuss together. In these coming conferences, can the human phase of the problems involved be put first and foremost? Can self-interests be subordinated to the larger interests of humanity as a whole? Can selfishness and greed be replaced by unselfishness and the spirit of kindliness? Back of all other questions of social theory, of technique and method, behind all our intellectual convictions of what ought to be, lie these still deeper questions that challenge the leaders of this and the coming generations. These are not new questions; in fact, they are so old that to many they seem to have lost their meaning. But old as they are, they are the burning questions of our age none the less, and we ignore them only at our peril. We must come to see far more

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clearly, more widely, more deeply, with "the eyes of the head," but pray God! the "eyes of our hearts" may be opened before it is too late, that we may come *to feel* our common humanity and so learn the great art of being kind.

If it is true that "only kindness can save the world," the twofold problem becomes simply this: How can we produce kindness in ourselves, and how can we awaken it in others? If we can answer the first, we have answered the second, for persistent kindness invariably begets kindness in others, just as inhumanity begets inhumanity. In the long run we get what we give, no more, no less. How then can we develop the temper and spirit of kindness in ourselves? We must believe first of all in the possibility of such development in ourselves and in all men. In a recent address Felix Adler calls attention to the fact that the Freudians have much to tell us about the subconscious but when they speak of things subconscious they generally mean the primitive things, the instinctive things, the things which we share with the creatures beneath us in the scale of life. He then proceeds to affirm his conviction that there is also present in the subconscious something of which the Freudians are not in the habit of speaking, "that

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is, a divine power—hidden, latent, apparent only here and there on the surface, but present in all men. That power I call the spiritual possibility. And by spiritual possibility I mean definitely the possibility of responding to the idea of perfection.” The better human world for which we yearn is a world in which all human beings will respond to the ideal of kindliness as the few eminent ones do now. It is our faith in the possibility of a kindlier world that calls into being the latent kindliness in our own natures, and through us, in all with whom we come in contact.

But on the basis of this faith we must resolve upon a course of rigid self-discipline. It will not be so easy as, Bertrand Russell rather playfully suggests, through the injecting into one’s vein’s some substance yet to be discovered which will flood one’s life with benevolence toward his fellows. It will only be accomplished as all the instinctive impulses of selfishness and greed and hatred are brought under subjection to the higher and nobler impulses of unselfishness and kindliness, so that the higher nature in us shall come at last to dominate the lower—that which we have inherited from the animal and the savage. Only thus do we become truly human; it is alone through such discipline that we develop our di-

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vine possibilities. To be satisfied with less than this, is to surrender the greatest opportunity that life affords—that of becoming one's true, one's ideal self.

In "Paracelsus," one of his earliest and yet one of his greatest poems, Robert Browning describes the young man as he sets forth on his quest for knowledge, such knowledge as will benefit his fellow-men. Paracelsus declares that all the wisdom of the past has done nothing for mankind. Men have labored and grown famous, their works have multiplied, but the evils of life are unabated; the earth still groans in the blind and endless struggle with them. And so he aspires to know the truth that has never yet been discovered. At last, after long years of wandering and searching for the truth, he finds himself in a Professor's chair in the University in Basel. He has attained, and yet, he has failed. He has done what he planned, but he is not satisfied. But with his unconquerable soul, he leaves the University and starts out once again on the old quest but with new methods in pursuing it. And at last, an old man now, broken and dying, he discovers the secret which he breathes out to his old friend Festus. Paracelsus has devoted his life to knowledge, but has left love out. And

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knowledge could not satisfy his soul. It is too late when he comes to realize his mistake. His mental habits are formed. He has missed life where he thought he would find it. And the realization of how he has failed of life's fulfillment haunts him in his delirium on his death bed. And the secret Paracelsus discovered, and what Browning is trying to say in this drama, is just this: Not knowledge alone, nor love alone; but knowledge *and* love reveal the deepest secrets of existence and lead one's life to the highest.

It is only the poet's way of saying that not conviction alone, nor kindliness alone, but ever and only, conviction *and* kindliness that can lead the way to that symmetry of life in us that will one day make possible the realization of human brotherhood.

"So many gods, so many creeds,
So many paths that wind and wind
While just the art of being kind
Is all this sad world needs."

XII

THE TRUTHS MEN LIVE BY



WE turn away at last from all the theological questions involved in the present controversy within the churches to consider what is, after all, the only real *fundamental* question in religion, namely, What are the truths men live by? We have taken the position in previous chapters that none of these questions, as they are being so hotly debated today, go to the heart of religion, that they only represent the imperfect rationalizations of men, past or present, *about religion*, that religion itself is an experience and that, therefore, these questions of theology are in no sense synonymous with religion. But this is only half the story, and the least important part at that.

If theology is what men speculate about, debate upon, and inevitably disagree over, and if the traditional theology of the old creeds has been hopelessly outgrown, in any literal sense, by the widening experience and deepening

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thought of men, then what *does* constitute religion, what are its true sources, what are the religious needs of man? Much of what we have said thus far has been negative; it has been clearing the field of accumulated débris and useless underbrush, but the positive constructive task still remains. Unless we are content "to empty out the baby with the bath," we must proceed now to discover what *are* the truths that men live by, whence do they spring, and what is their significance for us of today?

If we can imagine some great catastrophe destroying every Bible, obliterating every creed and wiping out of existence every ecclesiastical institution, and still further, also destroying in living men every trace of memory of all these things—of all that religion has meant and been—would there be any place for religion in such a hypothetical age? Would there still be any need for religion, and if so, what would be its sources, with no Bible or creed or church of any kind to depend upon? Or, to take not a hypothetical but a purely realistic instance, of which there are multitudes all about us in this modern age: Here is a man to whom the Bible makes no appeal, for whom the creeds have lost all meaning, and who no longer has any faith in the churches and their

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teachings—is there a place for religion in any sense in such a man's life? He has turned his back on all the symbols and instruments of religion as they exist in the community, but does this mean necessarily that he has lost all religion and that there is no longer any basis for religion in his life? Must he surrender religion as being only “the baseless fabric of a dream,” and put it forever out of his life as he would any other superstition from the past? Or, can he discover elsewhere a new basis for religion, and on this new basis reconstruct his religious life, entirely apart if need be, from all the old doctrines and existing institutions of religion which have lost their meaning for him?

It is obvious that the one and only place to which our hypothetical age that knows nothing about religion as it has been, or our actual man or woman who has outgrown the old religious conceptions, can turn in order to find any new basis for religion is to the real daily experience of living men and women. It is to our actual experience, therefore, rather than to any Bible or creed or church, that I want to turn just now for the answer to our question: What are the truths that men live by? And when I say “experience,” I mean the general universal experi-

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ence of men, and not some particular experience like that, for example, which Professor James in his "Varieties of Religious Experience," recognizes as "the mystical experience," and whose validity he accepts for certain types of mind, but which he admits is utterly impossible to the majority of men. That there are "experiences" natural to certain psychological types and wholly unnatural to other types we know to be true; but it is to none of these particular "experiences" that I want now to appeal, but to the common, fundamental and universal experience of all men. When we turn to this universal human experience we find that the first truth men live by is:

1. *That there are things in human experience that make life worth living.* In Millet's well-known painting, "The Angelus," we have one of the great pictures of modern times, not so much perhaps because of its artistic execution as because it symbolizes the fundamental experiences in man's life. As you will recall, the picture represents a furrowed potato field. In the foreground stand with bowed heads two figures—a man and a woman. At their feet are the implements of their toil—a barrow, a potato fork and a basket. Far away on the horizon rises the

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squat tower of a little church from which the Angelus has just sounded the hour for evening prayer. And over it all is diffused a sense of quiet peace and beauty. This is all there is to the picture, and yet how eloquently it sets forth the fundamental experiences of human life! The implements of daily toil symbolize work, the man and woman together speak of love, the bowed heads and the little church in the distance suggest reverence, and the peace and quiet of the scene breathe a sense of beauty deeper than words to express. *Work, love, reverence and beauty*—while these are not the only worth-while experiences in our lives, who of us is there that will not admit that these things are fundamental and typical of the experiences that do make our lives worth the living?

The constant theme underlying all of Millet's paintings is this: "Man goeth forth to his labor from morning until evening." But it is something more than "the dignity of labor" that he seeks to depict; it is the primacy of work in human life, the inevitableness of work for human beings, the fact that life, if it be really life, *is* work. The body is made for action, and wastes away without it. Psychology proves that the same holds true for the mind, and that sooner

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or later our impulses and emotions, our ideas and thoughts, must find expression in actual concrete action. We were not made to be idle either in body or mind, and it is only the abnormal or diseased person who can even pretend to be content with a life of inactivity. The great majority of us would go mad if it were not for our work with its constant demands upon time and strength and ability. It is in our daily work—in the things we do—that we learn and grow and develop our latent powers.

This is not to say that we are all happy in our work, or that it is yielding us all that it might in the way of development. In a perfectly organized society there would be none of the misfits that constitute the tragedy in human society. But the artist would be doing artistic work, the scholar would find his natural place, the inventor would not be slaving for a machine, the writer would not be footing up figures in some office. Psychological tests and vocational guidance are but just beginning their great task of helping individual boys and girls to know the kind of work for which they are naturally fitted, and then, to prepare themselves in the fullest possible way to do that work. One of the greatest problems confronting this machine age is how

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to get the industrial work of the world done without stultifying the powers and dwarfing both mind and body of the industrial worker, as we do today. The problem must be solved, if we are to have any regard for the human personality, but its solution lies in readjustments and changes in the conditions under which the work is done so as to satisfy the physical and psychological needs of human nature, coupled with the fitting of the worker to his task, and not in the doing away with work, even if that were possible. Fortunate, indeed, is that man who has found the work he is fitted for, the work that calls out the best that is in him, the work that demands not the least, but the most of time and energy, for it is only in such work that we find our truest happiness and our highest development.

It needs no argument to prove that love furnishes one of the most worth-while experiences of life. To love and to be loved, if not by many then by the few, or even by some single individual; how this alone makes all the difference between real living and mere existence! It may be the love of husband for wife or wife for husband, of parents for children or children for parents, or of friend for friend. And when this natural human love seems to be thwarted or de-

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nied, there are always other people and little children to whom one's love instinctively goes out; and when the response that we have the right to expect fails us even here, there is still the dumb, faithful dog whose devotion is unfailing, the love for nature, or books, or for some great cause, which, if it does not take the place of the human love, is, nevertheless, in many lives, a rich compensation for that other love which we have somehow missed in life. So long as there is *some one*, or *some thing* left for us to love, life is still worth the living whatever else may have been denied us. It is only when we come to feel that no one cares for us, and that there is no one left who either wants or needs our love that life loses for us its meaning.

"The mind has a thousand eyes
The heart but one,
Yet the light of the whole life dies
When love is done."

Reverence is also one of the universal experiences. All men do not reverence the same things nor do they express their reverence in the same way. But the man who does not revere something is less than human. Not to revere something that is higher than oneself is not to look up and beyond oneself. It is to be contented with

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oneself as he is, to be self-complacent and self-satisfied, to know or care about nothing higher and better than he already possesses, to live in this world of wonder and mystery and never be moved by it all; it is never to aspire, never to reach out toward the heights beyond. If such a man exists, he is a fit candidate for some asylum. The deepest thing in us is our discontent, at times if not habitually, with ourselves as we are, and our earnest aspiration toward the things we revere.

Sometimes we call the object of our reverence "God," or Truth, or Goodness, or Nature, or the great Personalities of the past, or just Life. But whatever we call these objects we know that they represent something that lies beyond our present attainments, something that is higher and better than ourselves toward which we yearn. Sometimes our reverence finds expression in the common forms of worship, sometimes in the earnest search and delving after truth, sometimes in the silent "communion with nature," sometimes in the contemplation of the Great Lives of all ages, often in quiet meditation when alone with our ideals. Constituted as we are, we must needs revere the highest, in whatever form it may be presented to us. This is what it means

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“to walk reverently through every day.” Just because we are beings capable of growth, just because we are men and women in the making, we must aspire and reach forth to that which lies beyond; and the objects of our aspiration are the things we truly revere.

But if the experiences of work and love and reverence are universal, just as universal is man’s sense of the beautiful, though it is often inarticulate. We are told that art is long, but it is certainly sure; for it is the expression of man’s fundamental demand for life in its beauty that fashions mere stones into temples and statues, mere sounds into music and melodious speech, mere paint into pictures, and articulate thought into literature. To make all of life more beautiful by replacing all that is ugly and unsightly and hideous by new forms of beauty has been the more or less conscious striving of man from the beginning. The passionate search for beauty is as striking as the search for truth or goodness.

The simple fact is that Beauty’s secret is still her own, and we receive her message and respond to it, not because we understand it, but only because we *must*—something *in us* responds instinctively to beauty’s call. “Beauty,” said Hegel, “is merely the Spiritual making itself

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known sensuously." It is in this profound sense that "beauty is truth and truth is beauty." It was of this inner truth of beauty that St. Augustine cried in a moment of lucid vision, "Oh, Beauty, so old and yet so new, too late have I loved thee." We are all, whether we are conscious of it or not, on the ceaseless quest for the beautiful; and in the play experiences, the leisure hours of our lives, we pursue the quest even more ardently than in our work.

These, then, are fundamental and universal experiences in human life that may be taken as typical of those things that make life worth the living, whatever the other conditions of life may be. In our work, our loves, our capacity for reverence, and our sense of the beautiful we possess *in experience* the actual knowledge of things that are worth while, and which we feel instinctively give meaning and significance to our lives.

But this is not all; in fact, it is only the smallest part of the meaning of these fundamental experiences. As we begin to reflect we soon discover that through each one of these experiences we are lifted out of our individual selves into wider relations that transcend the individual. At the outset we may say, "*my work, my love, my*

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reverence, *my* sense of beauty," and these experiences may seem wholly personal and private and isolated; but we do not go very far before we perceive that "my work, my love, my reverence, my sense of the beautiful" bring me into direct and immediate touch with the work and love and reverence and beauty of countless others. And this leads us to the second truth men live by, namely:

2. *That these worth-while things in life transcend the individual.* These experiences are social as well as individual. If I work with my hands, I discover that I am dependent on a vast network of social and economic relationships if I am to do my work successfully—organizations, factories, tools, raw materials, facilities for distribution, the demand for my labor, markets, etc., etc. The same thing is true if I belong to the class of merchants, bankers, salesmen, clerks, bookkeepers, truck drivers, etc. I am dependent on a complicated and elaborate system of social relationships; and my ability, my desire, my actual work are only effective as I can make a satisfactory adjustment of myself to these relationships.

If my work is more strictly mental, that is, if I belong to one of the so-called professions, I do

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not escape in any sense these manifold relationships. If I write a book or preach a sermon or try a lawsuit or treat a patient or lecture in a class-room, still, I am dependent for the processes of thought, for the methods employed, for the very ideas I express, to countless others who have gone before me. My professional training is the result of the thinking of my teachers, of the books I have studied, of the general cultural life with which I have come in contact. To use my training effectively I must make proper adjustment with my age, my community, my clientele, my constituency, my customers, my patients, etc. In a narrow sense my work may be individual, that is, it may be colored by my particular individuality, but in the broader sense my work is only possible, it can only become effective, in just the degree that I enter intelligently into these manifold social relationships of every kind.

Obviously, again, my love, which usually begins as the most intensely personal thing, always leads on to the higher social plane. It is of the very essence of love to lift one out of self; the going forth of love, in any form, is always a going out of self—to *another*. Who of us has not watched with amusement and delight the first signs of the awakening of love in some self-

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centered youth or maiden? With the coming of love, self is forgotten, and one begins to think, to do, to sacrifice for the other as he has never done formerly. The parents' love for the child means a still further widening of love's boundaries. Friendship, especially if it is not limited to one group or class, lifts one still farther above the individual plane. And, thus, as love grows and widens its range of self-giving, the individual is transcended more and more, until in its highest and noblest forms, love comes to mean the living of one's life consciously in union and fellowship with all who live and aspire everywhere.

In a slightly different, but no less real way, do reverence and the sense of the beautiful lift us out of the narrow boundaries of the self and make us know ourselves as members of a vast community of those who also revere the highest and seek the beautiful. At first the things we reverence and the beauty we admire seem to be our own private discoveries, until we come to realize that we are only individual members of a vast company of those who revere the highest, and that they, too, look in reverence toward the same essential things that compel our reverence; that all men are seeking the beautiful, and that in its essential aspects they find their satisfaction

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pretty much where we find it. More than that, we discover that the objects of our reverence and the secret places of beauty have been given to us through the profoundest thinking, the loftiest visions, the heroic sacrifices of the noblest lives in every age and clime; and as we contemplate these lives, or read their books, or gaze upon their pictures and statues, or listen to their music, that which has been inarticulate in our own souls hitherto, becomes, under their influence, articulate and meaningful; and as our whole being goes forth in response to what they have inspired, we find ourselves becoming one with that great company of prophets and sages, of poets and seers, of martyrs and saints of all the ages.

Reflection, therefore, shows us that these fundamental and universal experiences of work, love, reverence and beauty are not only worthwhile, but that they transcend the individual, they lead us directly into manifold social relationships, they reveal a thousand and one influences and forces, as well as other individuals, upon whom we are all dependent, and with whom we are all inextricably bound together. In a word, while these experiences are in a sense individual, in a deeper sense they are social experiences; and thus life

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in its fundamental aspects becomes for us a social rather than an individual thing.

But as we reflect still further, we discover that these universal experiences also transcend the social; they do not find their complete fulfillment either on the individual or the social plane; they seem to suggest something still higher, something that lies still beyond. And this leads us to the third truth men live by, namely:

3. *That these worthwhile things in life transcend present achievements both in the life of the individual and also in the life of mankind.* Or, to put it into other words, the human needs which these experiences reveal find their satisfaction neither in the individual nor the life of society as it actually is, but reach on inevitably into the ideal realm. The most important thing about any man is his dream; his dream of his own future. We understand this when we look at such lives as Demosthenes or Napoleon or Roosevelt. Demosthenes stammered, but he dreamed of becoming a great orator; because of his dream he became the most eloquent speaker of ancient times. The young and sickly Napoleon dreamed of conquering the world, and he nearly succeeded. Roosevelt was a weakling in body and only average otherwise, but he dreamed of becoming "an all-

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around and complete human being.” But what we do not always see is that every human being has a dream of himself. One man dreams: “I will be rich.” Another: “I will rule others.” A third dreams of becoming an inventor. Still another longs to become the great artist. So every man dreams his dream of the future, and if he dreams intensely enough and has the will and persistency to translate his dream into some degree of reality, his dream becomes the determinative force of his life.

But actually, these dreams, in most cases, are not what they appear to be. If they were clearly understood they would all be found to be pretty much alike. What every one of these dreams really says is this: “I want to be *more than I am*. I want to be more wise, more influential, more happy. I must, in some way, *be more*. And what does this “*more*” really mean? It means the instinct for self-development. It means that the first and fundamental law in human nature is the law of growth. And the person who is most truly alive is the one who is most keenly conscious that he is here to grow from *more to more*. This means that the man who is awake, alert and conscious of his possibilities is never satisfied with what he is; he is forever pressing forward

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after *the more* he believes he can yet attain. He creates his ideals, and he lives by his ideals. In fact, his real life is lived much more in the realm of his ideals than it is in the realm of actualities. For he has caught a great vision of what his life may be. He has dreamed his dream of what he can become. The inspiration for each day's striving comes through his ideals. He will go without comforts, he will even deny himself necessities, he will burn the midnight oil, he will make every sacrifice and endure all privations—and all for the sake of something that has no existence in fact, but whose reality lies wholly, as yet, in the realm of ideals.

And it is these universal human experiences that he knows to be worthwhile—work, love, reverence and beauty—that lead him directly into this ideal realm. No man is ever satisfied with the quality of the work he does. He always knows that something *more* is possible—something finer, better, nobler than anything he has yet done. His present failure to achieve what he deems the best of which he is capable is what goads him on to renewed effort; what he fails to achieve now, is what forces him into the realm of ideals in his work, whatever it may be. No man is ever satisfied with the quality or the quan-

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tity of the love he gives. In his love for wife or children or friends or humanity, every man is always conscious that vastly *more* is possible—that he is capable of a more unselfish, a less fitful, a wiser, a more disinterested, a more inclusive love than any that has as yet gone forth from his life. It is his failures and shortcomings in the love experiences of life that lift a man into the realm of ideals in his love aspirations.

In the same way every man realizes that he falls far short in revering enough those things that are worthy of reverence. His reverence is spasmodic rather than habitual; he is inclined to lose his grasp on the high through his daily contact with the low. The cares of life and the things of the material world seem to clog the channels through which his reverence should flow. He does not spend time enough in communion with the great lives, he does not read as he should the great books, he feels a disinclination for music and art though he knows that these feed the sources of reverence, he has little time left for quiet meditation and reflection. It is also true that man is forever unsatisfied in his quest for beauty. No one has ever exhausted the resources of beauty; no one has ever found all the beauty that his soul craves; we are all thirsting for *the*

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more of beauty that we feel still lies beyond. It is our conscious failures in the experience of reverence and in our search for beauty that urge us inevitably into the realm of the ideals.

But if the individual experiences of these worthwhile things leave us forever unsatisfied and force us to create the ideal realm where we can dream our dreams and see our visions of what our lives might be, how much more true is it that the social experiences of work and love, of reverence and beauty also leave us crying out, often in anguish of spirit, against the actual conditions that exist—stupidity, aimlessness, selfishness, greed, needless cruelty, superficiality, hypocrisy, injustice and wrong in all their many forms. It is no wonder that Jesus dreamed his great dream of a Kingdom of God on earth, or that all lofty spirits, before and since, have shared his dream. Such lives have been compelled to create their visions of an ideal world by the unjust and brutal conditions of life about them. It is the actualities in the life of mankind that stir us up to “a divine discontent” and force us to create our utopias and to dream our dreams of a different and a better world for men.

If we are perfectly satisfied in our individual lives with our work, our love, our reverence and

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our thirst for the beautiful, there would be no place for ideals. Or, if we were content with this world just as it is, and saw nothing that needed to be changed in the interests of truth or justice or love, then we would feel no urge to dream of a better world to be. It is just because these fundamental and universal experiences that we feel to be worthwhile, both in their individual and social aspects, leave us forever unsatisfied and at the same time seem inevitably to point toward a more complete fulfillment, that we are forced to create the ideal realm where we find "God," "the highest and best," "the dream and the vision for life," without which life would be poor and meaningless indeed. And this leads us to the next truth men live by:

4. *In devoting himself to the realization of these ideal things both in his individual life and in the life of society, can man alone give significance and permanence to his existence.* There is only one kind of death that is truly tragic, and that is the death of a man's ideals. So long as one follows the gleam of his vision, so long as he refuses to surrender his ideals, so long as he earnestly seeks the realization of his dreams, so long as he lives true to the best and highest he sees, just so long his life possesses a significance

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that nothing else can give, a value from which no so-called outward "failure" can detract. And every man and woman knows from experience how true this is. The only real discouragement, the only fatal disillusionment in human life, is that which follows our own failure to be true to the highest of which we are capable. Even our mistakes and follies and sins can all be forgiven provided only we still persistently cling to our ideals.

"True greatness consists not in never falling,
But in rising every time we fall."

The only unpardonable sin I know is the sin of refusing to follow the light that shines for us, for this is the sin that puts to death our real and ideal self. There is one further truth that men live by, namely:

5. *That man can actually achieve some measure of success in the realization of his ideals here and now.* In one of her "Dreams," Olive Shreiner tells the story of a woman soon to become a mother who wanders out over the African *veldt* and is lost in the mist. After a time a shape appears out of the mist. "If I touch you," it says, "your child will find wealth." The woman shakes her head and the shape disap-

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pears. A second shape speaks: "If I touch you, your child will find fame." Again the woman shakes her head. A third shape promises power. And so on. Finally a strange shape appears. "And if I touch you," it says, "your child shall have neither wealth, nor fame, nor power, nor success. But he will always see a light beyond the horizon, and he will always hear a voice calling him from behind the hills. And he will set out after the voice and the vision; but as he reaches them, lo! beyond the horizon a new light, and in his ears a new voice. And he must leave all and go." And the woman murmured: "But what gift will my child receive?" "This," answered the strange shape: "When he looks at the dust he will always see the beautiful in it. In the real he will see the dream." And the woman sobbed out: "Touch me." And the shape touches her and vanishes.

This, as it seems to me, is a beautiful picture of the true idealist—to see the beautiful in the dust; to find the dream in the real. There is an idealism that is unreal simply because it has no possible relation to the things that are. It may present a beautiful picture of an ideal state or person, but it fails to connect up in any way with the real world of human nature. It is out of

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such idealism that the classic utopias have been written all down through history. I would not deny that such utopian visions have a value. I believe they have; but their value does not consist in their capacity of being realized; they were never intended to be realized. They serve the twofold purpose of emphasizing the necessity of having ideals, and also of stimulating men to formulate ideals that can be realized.

What the world needs is more than simply an idealism that is vague and detached from human nature, however beautiful it may be. The demand today is that men should "see life steadily and see it whole," that they should know human nature for what it really is—its worst as well as its best—that they should become familiar with all the facts and forces that are operating in the life of mankind, that they should understand the problems presented by this modern age and all that is involved in them, and then, on the basis of this knowledge, that they should create such ideals for man's life, both individual and collective, and so present them that men shall know themselves capable of beginning, at least, the realization of these ideals, and shall be compelled by the inherent power of the ideals to move in their direction. Using the phrase

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in the best, and not the debased sense, it is a *practical idealism* for which the world waits to-day. The leaders needed are the men and women who are every inch the idealists, and yet who have the great gift of seeing the beautiful *in* the dust, the dream *in* the real. This ability is what constitutes the intelligent man of vision as opposed to the blind visionary. This attitude does not mean the compromise with the ideal, but it does demand patience, tact and love; it does require deep and broad knowledge of human nature and of social forces; it does demand a technique and method, as well as a skill, that most idealists, as such, know little or nothing about. The idealist who can see the dream in the real is the one who, in spite of all untoward conditions and difficult obstacles, does find courage to persevere, in his conviction that progress is being made even when things look darkest.

These, then, are the basic and universal human experiences that reveal the religious needs of human nature. It is clearly obvious that, entirely apart from all theology or ecclesiasticism, these experiences of work and love, of reverence and beauty, lead every man inevitably into the realm of ideals, which is the realm where religion is born. Being constituted as he is, with his

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experiences what they are, and in a world like this, if he reflects at all man cannot help being religious, though his religion may be of a very different type from that of either Dr. Straton or Dr. Fosdick. When Sabatier says that "man is incurably religious," what he means is simply this, that no man, if he be worthy the name, can live his life apart from ideals, and religion is at the outset *experience with ideals*. But these ideals to which man's experience inevitably lead him become, in turn, the basis of the broader, deeper and richer religious experience.

For growing out of these basic experiences in human life come (1) *the need of reflection*. To go through life, as many do, without reflecting on one's experiences, without ever pausing to inquire as to their meaning, without seeking to ascertain their significance, is to abandon the use of reason in the interpretation of one's own life, which only the foolish and utterly thoughtless would think of doing. As we have seen, it is through reflection that a man discovers the things in his experience that are worthwhile. Through reflection he comes to see that these things are not only individual, but social. Through further reflection he finds that these same experiences lead on inevitably into the ideal realm, and that

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his life only possesses significance as he devotes himself to the pursuit of the ideals. Still further thought upon his experience reveals to him that as he earnestly strives toward these ideals, some progress is actually made in their realization, that the dream *does* lie in the real. And all this is only a skeleton outline of the interpretation of the meaning of his experience to which still further thought will lead him.

(2) There grows out of these experiences also *the need of a vital faith*. Not faith in the sense of an intellectual acceptance of some dogma or set of doctrines *about* religion. But faith as representing the sum total of a man's entire attitude toward the ideal things of life; a faith in the reality of these ideals; a faith that no worthy force expended is ever lost, that no unselfish love expressed is ever futile. As Felix Adler recently put it, "the growing conviction and the clearer vision of the eternal spiritual universe as real." It is the faith that Count Leo Tolstoi described as "the sense of God." However we may prefer to phrase it to ourselves, we all mean by it the same thing: the power that brings unity into our inner life, and that gives stability, meaning and purpose to all we are and all we do, because we have glimpsed the ideal world.

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(3) And the third need growing out of these experiences is *the need of devoted service*. To practice the thing we preach; to do the thing we talk about; to translate our ideals daily and hourly into the definite concrete acts; to give the cup of cold water as instantly as we would make the great sacrifice; to bring the beautiful out of the dust; to transform the real by our dream—this is to live the life of devoted service.

The truths men live by, as we have discovered them growing out of actual universal human experience, lead on naturally to, nay more, do they not make imperative, the religious life that consists of reflection on these experiences, of a living faith in the ideals to which these experiences inevitably lead, and of a life of devoted service in the realization of these ideals? I have said nothing of theology as such, nothing of ecclesiasticism with its forms and rituals, its rites and ceremonies, nothing even of the Bible with its inspirations, for none of these, or all of them put together, constitute religion, though they are all outgrowths, in past ages, of religion. I have sought to interpret religion in its simplest and most fundamental terms. I have tried to show that its ultimate sources lie deep within human

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nature, that religion exists because of real and permanent needs in human nature, and that the religion needed today is the religion that can truly satisfy these human needs without insulting either man's intelligence or his conscience. In the life of reflection, of a living faith in the ideal things, and of devoted service to humanity, I find the outline, at least, of a religion for to-day—a religion that grows naturally out of the actual universal experiences of living men and women.

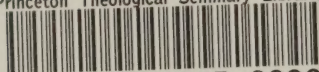
If I am, in any sense, correct in this analysis, if religion in its essence consists in the bringing together of these basic experiences of work and love, of reverence and the sense of beauty, lifting them above the plane of the routine and prosaic, refining and dignifying them, interpreting more and more clearly their deeper meaning, and thus making religion one with all of life, then it must be clear, the true function of any religious organization is to teach and stimulate reflection on the experiences of life, to inspire and strengthen a living faith in the ideal things of life, and constantly to lead men out into intelligent and practical forms of human service.

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“And what is faith? The anchored trust that at the core of
things
Health, goodness, animating strength flow from exhaust-
less springs;
That no star rolls unguided down the rings of endless maze,
That no feet tread an aimless path through wastes of
empty days;
That trusts the everlasting voice, the glad, calm voice
that saith
That Order grows from Chaos, and that life is born from
death;
That from the wreck of rending stars, behind the storm
and scathe,
There dwells a heart of central calm,—and this, and this
is faith.”

THE END

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